

S 712 0994
3

National Monthly Magazine of the Performing Arts

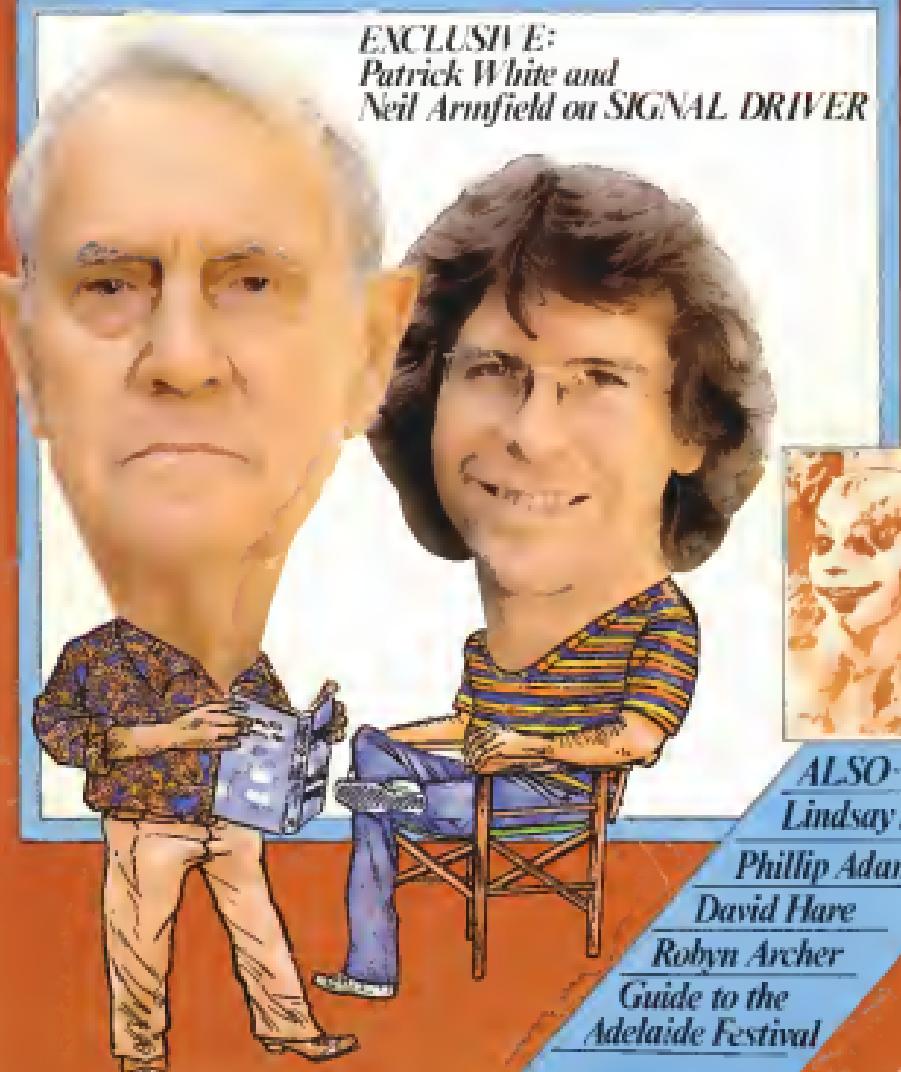
MARCH 1982

THEATRE

PRICE \$1.95

A U S T R A L I A

EXCLUSIVE:
*Patrick White and
Neil Armfield on SIGNAL DRIVER*



ALSO-
Lindsay Kemp

Phillip Adams

David Hare

Robyn Archer

*Guide to the
Adelaide Festival*

SYMPHONY IN LIGHT BY Strand

The Worldwide resources of the Rank Organisation
plus the latest manufacturing techniques
produces the new **Strand** theatre spotlights
No. 1 for performance. No. 1 for safety. No. 1 for reliability.
No. 1 for value.



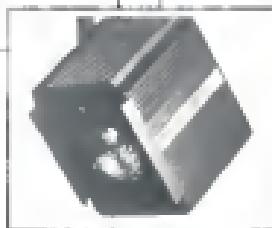
HARMONY

A range of 1kW profile, fresnel and P.C. spotlights. The workhorses of professional scale theatre lighting.



PRELUDE

A full range of sub-kilowatt profile fresnel and P.C. spotlight - ideal for medium scale theatre lighting installations.



MINIM

A 300/500 watt mini fresnel - ideally suited to display and small scale theatre lighting applications.

STRAND NO. 1 IN ENTERTAINMENT LIGHTING.

For full details and prices, contact the 'STRANDMAN' at Rank Electronics.

VICTORIA: 60 Flinderskirk Avenue, Clayton South VIC 3168 Phone (03) 591 6544

NEW SOUTH WALES: 16 Stirling Street, Parramatta NSW 2150 Phone (02) 874 5596

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: 101-103 Macgregor Avenue, Crows Nest Park SA 5036 Phone (08) 250 0371

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Transoceanic Street, Osborne Park WA 6016 Phone (09) 445 1871

or the following Strand dealers:

QUEENSLAND: Harvey Theatrical Lighting, 21 Creek Road, Althorpe QLD 4460 Phone (07) 442 4222

ACT/LAURE: Tony Catherill Hi-Watt Lighting, 27 Argus Street, Adelaide SA 5000 Phone (08) 717 2955

TASMANIA: K.H. McCullion & W. McCallum Pty Ltd, 44 Canning Street, Launceston TAS 7250 Phone (03) 621 0915
and all authorised Strand Agents.



Rank Electronics

The Arts Council of South Australia brings the big names to small places

1982 Country Programmes

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS IN MOUNT GAMBIER

Gimelharpe Colliery Brass Band March 6th
Australian Chamber Orchestra March 13th
Jean Lewis and Robert Gavin March 20th

CIRCUS OZ March 24-April 3

THE BRASS BAND March 29-April 6
(In association with Adelaide Festival Centre Trust)

**POLISHED BRASS with GUEST ARTIST,
COLLEEN HEWITT** April, July and September

WEST AUSTRALIAN BALLET COMPANY
April 20-May 22
(In association with Victorian Arts Council)

GYMNAStic DANCE COMPANY June 17-July 22

MARION STREET THEATRE August 3-24

JULIE ANTHONY September 22-October 7

SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE
October 6-November 6

SCHOOLS PROGRAMMES Maggie Tie, Pipi Storm,
West Australian Ballet Company, Early Music Duo,
Gymnastic Dance Company, Polished Brass, Energy
Connection, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre

COMMUNITY ARTS Arts Access, Country TAPS,
Country CAPS
Visiting Exhibitions (In association with Jam Factory and
Crafts Council of South Australia)

Arts Council of South Australia
97 South Terrace, Adelaide
Phone (08) 212 2642

H788

CONTENTS

THEATRE

LASTIVAL

Volume 6 No 6 March 1982

THEATRE

INFO	4
SHOWBUZZ/Norman Knott	9
THE RETURN OF ROBYN	
ARCHER/Michael de Morgan	11
EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION WITH PATRICK WHITE AND NEIL ARMFIELD ON SIGNAL	
DRIVER/Grae Wynne	12



THE WORLD OF DAVID HARE/Fiona Harrison talks to the British writer for the Adelaide Festival	16
--	----



GETTING THROUGH '82: How the companies are coping with the funding cuts/Cathy Peake	20
INTERNATIONAL/UK/Irene Wardle/USA/Karl Lavers/TI	21

REVIEWS/Countrywide reviews of the latest productions	24
---	----

GUIDE/All this month's theatre including full guide to the Adelaide Festival	38
--	----

DANCE

INFO	41
LINOSAT KEMP on his very personal side of Chance/Jill Sylor	43



REVIEWS/Human Veins and Temple Dancing/Bill Shearbridge	44
---	----

GUIDE/What's on this month in Chance	47
--------------------------------------	----

FILM

INFO	48
PHILIP ADAMS - AN INNOCENT APPROACH/Elizabeth Russell	49



REVIEWS/Heartbreak/Elizabeth Russell	51
--------------------------------------	----

GUIDE/The best films to see this month	51
--	----

OPERA

INFO	52
------	----

THE MASS SPIRIT/June Macdonald looks at the community opera events of the last week	53
---	----

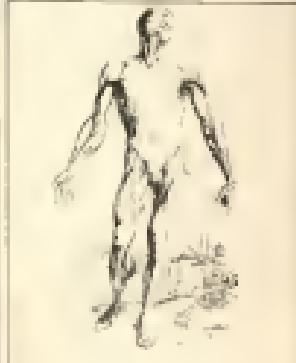
REVIEWS/Ken Hesley	53
--------------------	----

GUIDE/The month's opera events	56
--------------------------------	----

MUSIC

INFO	57
------	----

MUSIC THEATRE/Ronni Murdoch on defining the genre	58
---	----



REVIEW/Mostly Mozart.../Fred Blanks	62
-------------------------------------	----

GUIDE/The month's concert fare	62
--------------------------------	----

BOOKS

RECORDS AND COLLECTIONS/John McCutcheon	63
---	----

Editor

Robert Page
Lisa Wagner

Contributing Editors:

John Dylan
Peter McDonald

Drama

David Ballantine

Opera

David Ballantine

Film

David Ballantine

Books

David Ballantine

Publication Consultant:

David Ballantine

Art Director:

Alan Galli

Subscriptions Manager:

Alan Galli

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Ken Horne, Julian Leyson, South Pacific
Murray Kathleen Morris, Philip Parsons, Lucy
Shipton

ADVISORY BOARD:

The above plus: John Bell, Gavan Blandell,
Kathleen Brabourne, Bert Corden, John Clark,
Michael Cooley, Jack Hibberd, Carter
Hawthorne, Lake Howley, Phil Lyons, Raymond
O'Connor, Ken Southgate, Martin Thrupp, Ian
Tucker, Lynette Wain, Richard Wherrett
ABN 07 165 646 462

John Coyle, Personal Advertising Manager
1st Floor, 151 Bowring Street, Post Box 2041
Perth 6001 (09 366 4778 (all hours)

SALES REPRESENTATIVES:

SA 1 Joint Harley (07 92 3666)
SA 2 Falcons (07 927 2200)
VIC Suzanne (03 527 2510)
QLD Dorothy Bolgeran (07 317 2510)
NSW Margaret (06 341 1170)
SA Michael Morris (08 291 2304)

Theatre Australia gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the Theatre Board of the Australian Council, a statutory body of the Commonwealth Government; the New South Wales Cultural Grants Advisory Committee; the Arts Council, Adelaide Committee of South Australia; the Queensland Cultural Activities Department; the Victorian Minister for the Arts; the Western Australian Arts Council; and the assistance of the University of Newcastle.

MANAGING EDITOR:

Manuscripts and editorial correspondence should be forwarded to the editorial office, 1st Floor, 151 Bowring Street, Post Box 2041, Tel (09) 367 2200.

Whilst every care is taken of manuscripts and visual material supplied for this magazine, the publishers and their agents accept no liability for loss or damage which may occur. Unsolicited manuscripts and visual material will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Unsolicited or signed articles are not returned, those of the editor.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

The subscription rate is \$21 post free within Australia. Cheques should be made payable and posted to Theatre Publications Ltd, 1st Floor, 151 Bowring Street, Post Box 2041. For non-residential and overseas subscriptions, see front back page.

Theatre Australia is printed by Stutter Publications (Perth) Ltd, 151 Bowring Street, Post Box 2041. Distributed by subscription and through library agents within Australia and to non-residential libraries outside Australia. Postage is paid in the U.S.A. by Postmaster, 151 Bowring Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000.

Postage: Postmaster: U.S.A.: Mailing樞密院 except other specified. The above price is maximum full price. Registered for posting as a periodical (Reg. No. 6)

A National Drama?

This is the month of the Adelaide Festival. One of its major offerings is Patrick White's *Final Days*, which, through a quartet of characters and a central relationship, evocatively evokes the course of twentieth century Australian history and the post-war advance of the enormous city.

Patrick White's fortunes as a playwright are an indictment of our treatment of art for the stage in this country. His plays are complex, poetic, serious, a canon which anywhere else would ensure a place in the national body of plays that are continually produced. Shown's reversal of *The Season of Knights* and *A Cheerful Site* proved that, given the chance, the public would respond.

The STC, this year, now many more ago, the same thing with *Ray Lawler* and *The Dot Trilogy*, and is about to put on Lawler's *Gascoigne*, *Gascoigne*, but is there, generally, any wonder, both the commitment in our heritage and a coherent approach to content which builds a sense in the public mind of a national drama, in the way it existed, because of their total failure of the new wave, in the '70s?

Richard Wherrett did have as part of his platform for the STC, developing a policy of producing one outstanding play from the past each season — accordingly the company began with *The Seven Swans* in the new year of 1980. Since then, though, no longer plays are being mounted (and will be again with *A Map of the World* (O'Connor)), no more has been heard of the initiative to "establish a repertoire of Australian drama", an initiative I'd had at the time as "anathema to it is necessary".

Even the '80-'81 mix of local and overseas writing seems similarly to have gone by the board. Is it the new left-righting? — or is it that for the most part indigenous works seem in the same light as experimental work and must be consigned to second venues, and the STC's Wharf Pages has been disbanded?

The STC example is indicative of a wider problem, that the "elite" cults — Jack Hibberd noticed in 1974 has become a deepening depression. Certainly the burgeoning of writing in the early seventies was fuelled by, and reflected, a social and political upheaval of a spurious, optimistic kind. In confidence was not just in itself, but in being a part of an historic movement of change (like ending of the Vietnam war, for instance). Common causes made for unity.

Now the '70s revolution has been absorbed into the mainstream — (Rosenfeld)

The Playwriting World is to be presented by the MTC (which demands me of a Jim Hawker, and which ensured "They were the opposition, and now they're meeting with our fucking plan") — there is nothing to read and write against.

Writers have moved their gaze to the outside world. Look Nowra's James Davis, Fremantle and *The Person's Name*, Hibberd's *The Gherkin*, Bishop's *Blame* and Sewell's *Drum* and *Volume for Drury*. Paul Sewell is preaching, as Katherine Brabourne said in a discussion of this point, to an elite. Shared audience, they say, is to say, per the credibility gap between the world of the play and that of the audience is enormous. Perhaps the obliqueness of monetarism has pushed people back into apathy.

The other possibility, seen at the moment to be nostalgic, evocative and epic drama (hence Hawker has finally come into his own). Perhaps it is that the issues facing the world, economic crisis and the looming holocaust, are finally too big and seriously unacceptable to dramatic expression. Whatever the reason, our playwrights do seem to have the finger on the pulse of what is happening. They do not seem capable of defining where we are — in the way only Williams and Hibberd and O'Farrell did in their time, with the latter looking like the troubadour/musical/rock tradition while it was about it. David Hare talks in this issue of how when British playwrights have to sit about the current state of their country and the world at large (and they have a lot to say) is eagerly listened to and respected by the general public.

The problem is just, though, to be laid solely at the door of the theatre. But if our sense of a national drama is not to keep falling in decline, theatres must content themselves not just to Australian content, but to it as a primary source. English and American companies would not even consider any other than a broad-based approach to their national drama (here we excitedly applied even '80-'81). They also keep their heritage alive, not in a museum sense, but continually reinterpreting it for today.

Australia likewise, needs to establish the contemporary genre, significantly, in 1981 an application for a grant to mount a season of modern Australian classics was rejected. Without that sense of continuity we will keep going through waves and troughs with our drama and never see it as an ocean.



Peter Carroll

PETER CARROLL BACK AT NIMROD

Peter Carroll will be returning to Nimrod, having finished his 16-month stint as Artistic and General Director at Churchill for the STC, to play 'Poor Willy Sennett' in their first play of the new season, *The Savoids*. He follows on the footsteps of Derek Jacobi on Broadway and Graeme Blundell in Melbourne, though he himself hasn't seen the play performed. This will be the first time he has been directed by close friend Aubrey Miller and worked on stage with Angela French-McGregor, though he both worked with Aubrey and taught Angela in NIDA.

Carroll will also be acting in two more plays he directed over the next 12 months or so, and four over the next two years with the Sydney Theatre Company, though what they all are hasn't yet been decided. This year he will play Malcolm in STC's *Macbeth* and the lead in the new David

Williams play, *The Professor*. These are, though, corners for top players who are not part of the permanent company, nor obviously of great benefit to company, career and audience alike. For the actor this gives a degree of security without tying themselves completely, and for audiences it gives a chance to see the range of top actors' work without having to see the same faces in every production.

The Savoids was written in the late '20s, a play with tragic subject matter given special permission to exhibit the members of a society in which "only the dead say what the living may think". It was one rehearsal with Alwyn Hall, but was learned before the opening night and neither Alwyn nor Carroll ever wrote into the play.

Carroll had a hard decision to make as to what he was about to go to Perth to act in Dorothy Hecht's *The Fields of Heaven* at the same time, but decided that "that was the reason I'd ever get no playing Hamlet" so accepted Nimrod's offer.

PASCOE SHUFFLES THE PACK

As part of his "new broom" measures to upgrade the workings of the Australia Council, Dr Timothy Pascoe has re-organized its entire internal structure. At the time of writing the whole implosion of the management staff had been spelled. It sounds drastic, but in fact it is more a question of re-building than throwing the pack up in the air crying "off with their heads" they are to apply for five newly created positions that are being advertised only within the Council.

The reorganisation is fairly radical, with the ten current Boards — Aboriginal Arts, Community Arts, Crafts, Literature, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts — and their separate staff to be abolished. Instead, the Chairman (Pascoe) and the Council (of the Council) will oversee five new departments (the descriptions of which are the five advertised positions): Council Secretariat; Policy and Planning; Arts Co-ordination; Client Services; and Finance and Administration.

Finance and Admin, the Secretariat, and Policy and Planning, will contain the obvious, plus in the later the information, publications, theory, research and contact with the Federal Government and state funding bodies. Under Arts Co-ordination come all the old Boards, each will have one employed Director with the current system of rotating unpaid members drawn from the Profession. As present Board Directors will not change, this will happen in contracts and as people leave — the Music Board will be the first as the Directorship has just fallen vacant and will soon be publicly advertised. Eventually each Director is to be arts-practitioner or practitioner in the field, and will be concerned not with the deployment of staff under him, but with the art form itself, its practitioners and requirements.

The current staff of the Boards will be based in the department of Client Services, where they will be dealing with Arts and Organisation Services — ie with the organisations and individuals seeking funding — with Projects and Innovation and with Application Registration. Aboriginal Services will have a separate service in this department. Because of the cultural differences (apart from a few well-qualified people, staff will not deal with specialised arts as they did under the previous Board system, so grant applicants will very likely find themselves dealing with a different project officer) than previously.

The major reason for the restructuring is to promote efficiency and maximum output with the falling number of Australia Council staff. The present organisation was

designed for a small of some 250, there are at present only about half that number and contracts certainly don't allow for increases.

Dr Pascoe wants the primary aim of the Council to be the getting of government money for the arts and the presentation of the issues involved to the public. His other main aim is to service the arts and its organisations effectively, in terms of their needs. He is critical of the conservative way in which money has previously been allocated between the Boards, and thinks that the new structure will allow greater flexibility. At the same time, Pascoe says, the role of the Australia Council is to respond to needs, not to force initiatives could be referring to the Lenore Love idea, though he defends the Challenge Grant scheme as the fairest deployment of the reduced funding.

For further news of who will be doing what in the new look Australia Council, watch this space...

FUNDING RESTORED

With the Federal Government's about-face on funding cuts to the Australia Council, the Theatre Board has been able to restore grants to some of the companies who were originally to lose all funding this year. The Hole in the Wall gets \$26,000, the Ensemble, \$13,000, La Boite, \$18,000 (on top of the \$12,000 already given for their Early Childhood Drama Project), and the SA Dance Company, \$22,500. The Prism Factory did not receive an application and one Victorian company, Why Not Theatre and Theatresmiths, were rejected completely again.

Even the extra money from Government did not allow the Theatre Board to restore full, inflation-linked funding to everyone, though the money held back in the Challenge Grant scheme has been automatically released with a further amount available on Challenge.

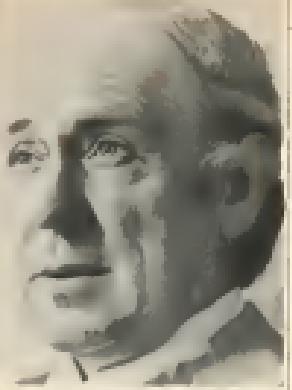
SHELL FOR PLAYBOX

The Playbox have been quick to get underway in the search for private sector funding. They have succeeded in getting the Shell Company of Australia to underwrite their Upstage program to the tune of \$40,000 this year. Shell's sponsorship is the largest single private corporate support Playbox has ever received and they will of course be also in need of \$1 for 1983 in the Australia Council's Challenge Grant scheme.

There was a small handing-over ceremony on the opening night of *Lenore Love's Lover* by Barry Dickson on February 10.

MTC SEASON

The Melbourne Theatre Company has announced its first season for '82 and will be



New play from Ray Lawler

looking off with Shakespeare as the end of the round. Sandy Gore will be playing Rosalind in *As You Like It* at the Athenaeum. At Russell Street Frederic Parlow will star in John Russell's brilliant play about Australian xenophobia, *The Flying Field*, irony that the year this piece makes its re-establishment debut, the place where it was presented eight years ago (the ATG) has finally sunk beneath the waves. A new Ray Lawler play entitled *Geofford* will be performed at the Athenaeum on July 20.

LIGHTS ON UPSTAGE

March 11 will see lights up at Sydney's newest theatre venue.

Geraldine Turner and John O'Meara will open in *Henry Fonda* in Kim and Lillian Hunter's Upstage theatre restaurant. It's at 652 George Street, right in the heart of centre city.

Ken Rusler



Upstage is to be a cabaret venue and it's ideally located and set up to house the solution to what the Hunter's perceive to be the last big gap in Sydney's entertainment spectrum - an intimate, elegant space where one's wish to eat and drink well can be accommodated in the same place and on the same night as one's appetite for lively, stimulating entertainment. The Hunters should know, they put their money and their energies where they consider were to set up *Normal* in 1980.

Henry Fonda redressed by Ken Rusler, Max Lambert as Musical Director, Larry Raymond set designer and Wendy Dickson will do the costumes. Expect to see Broadbent side by side with Sondheim, Clive James among it with Cole Porter and Noel Coward, to name but a few.

STC VERSATILITY

The Sydney Theater Company's of August goes on and on! It has used its capacity twice in the Theatre Royal on March 21 to make way for the STC's production of *As You Like It*. The Company has booked the commercial venue for a total of five months in '82 to supplement its reduced subsidy income.

It has also appointed Ralph Kerle, formerly of the Flying Trap in Melbourne, as Associate Director, his responsibilities will be to assist Donald McDonald on the administrative side and Richard Wherrett on the artistic. Clearly a versatile gentleman. He will also be in charge of developing second venue activities prior to the opening of STC's Walsh Bay headquarters.

The Artistic Director will also be showing his versatility when he directs Brecht's *Molasses*, for the Australian Open in June.

The versatile Ralph Kerle



FLUX AT THE NATIONAL

The National, Perth, seems to be in a state of flux since the departure of Stephen Barry at the beginning of the year. General Director Rodney Parker and Roger McCall will be working on productions and McCall will be interim company Director until the end of the March when we can expect a more permanent appointment to be made. John Tournier, the National's Administrator, also left recently and hasn't yet been replaced, so Production Manager, Duncan Dowd is taking responsibility for much of his work. Publicity Officer, Lyn Schwan resigned at the end of the year and has been replaced by the Don Francis Company. We await further developments.



Philip Scott — hold the fort at the national

THE Q IN '82

1982 looks like being an expensive year for Perth's Q Theatre, construction of its new 300-seat theatre is underway with completion date estimated for July. In the meantime the company's work season has been announced and includes Oscar's *If These Thighs See*, Williamson's *The Club*, *Cloud 9* and premières of two new Australian plays — *Safety in Numbers* by Philip Scott and Luke Hardy and *Merry Bloody Mary* by Marion Sharman.

Merry Mary had a reading at the Q last August and *Safety in Numbers* is a four-hander with songs. Philip Scott is well known in Sydney for his musical direction and last worked for the Q in *Present as Parade*. He's currently touring with the *Rocky Horror Show*.



Philip Scott, writer and composer of Safety in Numbers.

A FIRST FOR SYDNEY

Griffith theatre at the Studio, following the current production of *Tom Bla's Man*, is presenting what is believed to be a first for Sydney, an evenings theatre presented by the author. *Shows — Delusions and other forms of Self-Destruction* is a program of three one-act plays by Mel Penn, directed by Mel Penn.

The three plays, as the title might suggest, deal with the ways and mechanisms by which individuals are manipulated, and manipulate themselves into socially terminal situations. Billed as "an evening of light tragedy", the plays are *Medians*, an observation on that drive in all of us to live up to the somer more absurd expectations of others, *The Right of Lucifer McCall*, which looks at the way the socially disadvantaged accept that way by the plastic image of the media, and *Not for a Northern paradise* of man's need to find a meaning outside himself.

If past experience of Penn's plays is anything to go by, the Griffins' *community social absurdism* should be, if not provoking, at least courageous.

Mel Penn



TOMMY STEELE

Tommy Steele is back in the country, currently performing *The Tommy Steele Show* at Her Majesty's, Melbourne, and touring in April to the Capitol in Sydney. Apart from the solo pop music and variety shows he is best known for, Steele has also acted with the Old Vic in *Tony Lumpkin's She Stoops To Conquer*, and for Michael Cacoyannis in Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters*. On TV he has played Feste with Alex Giannini and Ralph Richardson in *Twelfth Night* and wrote an unusual script in prose and verse for a program of an autobiographical journey through his early childhood in London, which retains a classic. Steele is also an enthusiastic amateur painter and sculptor.



Tommy Steele

LA BOITE BECOMING PROFESSIONAL

A significant breakthrough has been made by Brisbane's La Boite Theatre in the progress towards the target of a professionally based community theatre. At a recent meeting, the theatre's General Committee carried two resolutions.

Council supports the policy of continuing growth of the professional resident staff of the theatre and.

Council supports the development of La Boite as a community theatre and accepts the need to employ actors and other theatre professionals — those professional personnel to be used in one of the theatre's activities.

La Boite has always functioned as an amateur theatre, depending on amateur director, administrator staff and the professional Early Childhood Drama Project wing for its pre-pro status. The intention is that a core of actors will

eventually form the basis of community theatre work, offering experience and expertise to amateurs coming in to participate in productions and, perhaps more significantly, initiating projects involving sections of the community outside the confines of the theatre building.



La Boite Artistic Director, Maclester Blaylock

OFF BROADWAY, SYDNEY

Chances are that a new venue on Bay Street, Ultimo, just off Broadway, could be opening before the end of the year. Jeremy Gadd (most recently of *Marsus Seven*) has bought the ex Metropolis Motors, opposite, between the two Grieves Brothers buildings and has coerced \$15,000 from each of the NSW Premier's Department and the Theatre Board to use it as a venue — called Off Broadway — for hire to the smaller, less expensive theatre companies which Griffin and One Extra might be typical takers.

It would be a rough space with uneven staging, there's a half plus gallery and layer with living accommodation above for the resident director. While it looks hopeful, results of a grant application for capital improvement has yet to be known to make the project a certainty.

It's interesting to note that the State Government has decided to fund Off Broadway as an alternative Sydney venue, while the Cleveland Street Performance Space, championed by Mike Mallon, has had its grant application knocked back.

DREAMING IN BLACK

by Paul deBurgh

Jon Sover founded The Black Theatre Of Prague in 1981. In 1983 the company's artistic director, His involvement with the company is all-encompassing — director,

composer, author and, until 1970, leading actor. Sover evolved and invented a technique which was loosely derived from the popularity of ancient China, where objects appeared to move by themselves against a black background. He refined this early art form and introduced ultra-wide lighting, to create audiences of illusion which has attracted audiences for twenty-one years. The company is called The Black Theatre because "these invisible, dressed in black, those who succeed in disclosing the hidden secrets of things among which we live, are the main actors of the Black Theatre".

When Jon Sover seeks performers to join his company, he casts a wide net. Approximately one third of the company comprises puppets, one third is made up of dancers and actors, and a third, narrators. During audiences, there are always people who come off the street to offer their services within the company. Sover has found over the years that some of these "non-actors" are very good amateur performers — so nowadays there are always some in the company. Once employed, the company members are contracted for one year at a time. The Black Theatre uses should for approximately nine months of every year. This has, in the past, created domestic upheavals and rifts for some of its members. In recent years this has been reduced by the employment of young, unattached performers, as well as married or married couples — creating a greater stability within the group.

The Black Theatre of Prague has toured more than thirty countries and finds that Argentina and West Germany are its most enthusiastic supporters, although the work is endorsed worldwide. Presently they are visiting Australia for the third time, having previously toured in 1984 and 1976. After Australia, they go to West Germany and Spain, before returning to Prague to re-enact their *Wish Of Dreams* for another fantasy.

STOP PRESS...

BIGGEST EVER ARTS BEQUEST FOR NIMROD

Nimrod Theatre has just received the biggest arts bequest in history, and one which makes them the only theatre company in the country to own their own building, outright.

The future of the company was unsure because the arrangement under which they paid a peppermint rent on the old Cerebos Salt factory was coming to an end. Now a former company, who wishes to remain anonymous, has bought the building and donated it to the theatre company's gift of real estate worth well over \$1,000,000.

Sydney Acting School

Director: Gillian Owen

108 Military Road, Mosman 2088,
P.O. Box 271, Spit Junction 2088.
Telephone 988 3882.

3 year Diploma Course
Evening Classes

Fully comprehensive training for
professional theatre including
radio and television -

Entrance By Audition.

ENQUIRIES: 988 3880.
Mon to Fri 2 - 6pm.



Q THEATRE'S 1982 SUBSCRIPTION SEASON

- 1 WHAT THE BUTLER SAW! A farce by Joe Orton
- 2 SAFETY IN NUMBERS A world premiere by Philip Scott and Luke Hardy
- 3 THE CLUB by David Williamson
- 4 MOLLY DIES A comedy by Martin Sherman — a world premier
- 5 CHARLEY'S AUNT A farce by Brandon Thomas

TICKINAH PLAYS: 17
Latest release Australian plays

FAREWELL BRISBANE LADIES

by Trevor Clarke

BLACK CHITARRINHINH

by Regis Pape

POKEY GUY by Jack Mulford

THE NAPOLI GUY by Harry Read

PISTARDY by John Koenig

AND MANY MORE TO COME! THE

BICKING COUPON HORNET TIMELIN

At Artbox Bookshop..... DR
K150 (inc. P&P) directly from

25 Potts Point Rd, Sydney 2000
(03) 439 2440



NIMROD SUBSCRIBE NOW . . .

to Australia's most vibrant theatre and save up to \$41.60 on a pair of season tickets.

The Suicide



NICHOLAI ERDMAN

Play 1: Nimrod Upstairs
OPENS Wed 24 Mar
CLOSES Sun 1 May

Delicately funny first. An original it is one of the master pieces of this century. (J. G. Rappo. S.M.H.)

Starring Peter Carroll
Directed by Aubrey Melzer
Designed by Richard Roberts

PARTY WALL

KEN HORLER

Play 2: Nimrod Upstairs
OPENS Wed 7 July
CLOSES Sun 18 Aug

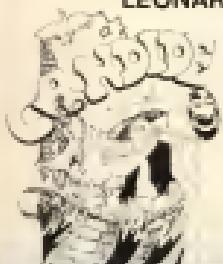
This popular three-part, with music and songs set in the 1930s, examines the phenomenon of frontier Australia.

Directed by George Whaley
Designer Axel Bartsch



York Theatre, Seymour Centre

LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S



OPENS Tue 20 April
CLOSES Sat 12 June

One of the masterpieces of American Musical Comedy. Adapted from *Death of a Salesman* combining the great talents of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim.

Directed by John Bell
Designed by Roger Kirk
Musical Director
Sharon Roschie

The Struggle of The Naga Tribe

RENDRA

Play 3: Nimrod Upstairs
OPENS Wed 19 May
CLOSES Sun 27 June

A brilliant adaptation of the traditional Japanese shadow puppet play. A satirical and very funny commentary on contemporary corruption.

Directed by Chris Johnson
Designer Richard Roberts



Tristram Shandy

Play 4: Nimrod Upstairs

OPENS Wed 25 Aug
CLOSES Sun 3 Oct

Based on Laurence Sterne's comic masterpiece and devised by Tim Robertson and the Nimrod Company. This madcap of Bartholemew Fair and Hogarth's *Bedlam* combines music and spectacle.

Directed by John Bell
Designed by Richard Roberts

ARTHUR MILLER'S

DEATH OF A SALESMAN

**Warren Mitchell
and Mel Gibson**

**York Theatre,
Seymour Centre**
OPENS Fri 9 July
CLOSES Sat 4 Sept

The American classic *Death of a Salesman* with WARREN MITCHELL in his British Award-winning role of Willy Loman and MEL GIBSON. Nimrod's production will be directed by George Ogilvie.

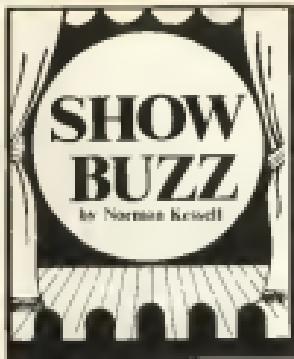


Directed by George Ogilvie

Ring Nimrod NOW and we will send you a free brochure.

nimrod

699 5003
699 6001



"Four plays for the price of three" and "Bargain basement prices" are current catch-cries throughout the land of Oz, where just about every non-commercial company is now on the subscription bandwagon, vying to offer patrons premium seats and reduced up-to-50% on a pair of tickets.

Harry M. Miller and the Australian Opera began it all, dragging in the phantom, but gradually all subsidised companies, faced with ever-decreasing government assistance, have found the subscription system the surest source of revenue.

In Sydney, last to succumb is the Ensemble Theatre, one of the eight throughout Australia to have had its entire subsidy withdrawn. It is offering a three play season that represents a saving of \$4-25 on normal prices.



John Bell — to direct *Candida*.

A major snag in the system is its inflexibility. In past years the Ensemble has been able to give extended runs to the best of the works from its annual Festival of Playwrights. This year, two of the four plays staged are worthy of more time — Craige Cronin's *I've Come About*, *The Suicide* and Ken Biros' *The Right Man* — but there is no way either can be slotted in during the subscription season and while interest is still fresh. No other suitable venue appears to be available.



George Ogilvie — directing Warren Mitchell and Mel Gibbons in *Death of a Salesman*.

The Sydney Theatre Company is offering alternatively alive, uncommercial play season, the Minervois four, five or six-play season, with subscribers free to make their own choice of plays. This, to some extent, meets a growing customer resistance to being committed to seasons they have no wish to see again, or a "blind date" with untried new works.

Two and three pieces are the main reason for a falling off in subscriptions generally. Many now prefer to wait for the reviews and make single bookings for the shows they really want to see. By so doing they usually save more than the saving offered on a season booking.

Two of the Minervois six plays are tent-commercial ventures to be staged at the Seymour Centre prior to national tour. They are the first Australian production of Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*, directed by John Bell for an April 20 opening, and Warren Mitchell recreating his triple award-winning portrayal of Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, directed by George Ogilvie

and with Mel Gibbons also in the cast. It opens July 9.

Well, *Barnes* has survived and *Chicago* and *They're Playing Our Song* are still going strong in Sydney. *Oklahoma!* is gearing up for an April opening in Adelaide and J.C. Williamson Productions Ltd is preparing the US musical *Love Me If You Can* for presentation soon, in association with Louis Burke and Joan Brickhill, so things are flourishing on the musical front.

As I mentioned last month, there's more to come. The nostalgic *Old历历* is a distinct possibility and J.C.W. managing director Robert Ginn tells me casting difficulties which halted negotiations on *Sugar Baby* last year may now soon be overcome. Moreover, he may by now have been able to announce yet another major American musical to be staged here in April or May.



John Duthie — back from London to star in *Oklahoma!*

There was also a glimmer in Peter Williams' eye when he took off with Gary Penny on Feb 7 for a fast three weeks show-shopping spree in Los Angeles, New York and London. I'll not be surprised if by the time you read this there has been an exciting announcement from this quarter.

Peter, by the way, has assembled a truly all-star cast for his production of *The Assumption*, to open for a six-week season at Sydney's Phillip Street Theatre March 18. June Salter has the Bette Davis role of Muri, John Hamblin at the transvestite, Henry, Alan Wilson and Zoe Bertram the young couple, Belinda Giblin and Malcolm Thompson the

other per *Feathers* are out for an interview tour to follow.

Hang up those who remember Peter Summerton's 1980 production at Sydney's Independent Theatre with Alison Belton, James Condon, Ross Thompson, Judith Fisher, Rosemary Butcher and Tony Thurston.

Which is my cue to mention that Piccolo Teatro di Milano's opening night at the Seymour Centre on March 15 will benefit the Peter Summerton Foundation, which in July is bringing to Australia Yevgeny Lansky — a Russian defector now teaching drama at New York University — for a five weeks workshop for directors. The Foundation, set up after Peter's untimely early death, has brought several of the world's top directors here for seminars and workshop.

Piccolo Teatro, established in 1947 to preserve the Italian traditions of commedia dell'arte, is a Festival of Perth audiences and this two weeks Sydney season will be its only other Australian appearance. Tickets are \$12. Phone Valerie Newstead (36-4442) or

Jane Winchester (36-5262).

I like the STC idea of having the dead subsidise the living — that is, using money derived from plays out of copyright to encourage the writing of new Australian works. The Company has set aside \$6,000 from the proceeds of its 1981 season of *Hamlet* and will allocate \$2,000 towards the development to a production script of the three best "resonant treatments" — not finished plays — submitted.

Sought are non-narrative works, large in scale and epic in theme, that reflect the essence of the plays from which the money is derived. Acceptable scripts will be included in an STC season and usual royalties paid.

Wonder how many, if any, we will see of the spate of American plays on parochial schools apparently sponsored by Mary O'Malley's *Over A Catholic*. These include *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains*, a passage comedy by Christopher Durang, *Do Fences Leather Skins Really Reflect Up?* John Powers' musical satirising books such as this, because nuns said the ones reflected up a girl's dress; *Catholic Schoolgirl*, a comedy by Casey Kastell, and *Man*

Appetit, a longer who by

Expatriate Australian novelist Morris West has now playperformed on Broadway, his first since *Daughter Of Salomé* in 1961. Titled *The World Is Made Of Glass*, it is inspired by Carl Jung's haunting memory-memoir in his *Autobiography*, of a woman who did not identify herself telling him she had murdered her best friend in order to marry her husband. The murder was never detected. Local entrepreneurs will no doubt be registering interest.

New director Jim Sharman's bid for greater exclusivity for this year's Adelaide Festival has disrupted somewhat what was becoming established as a sort of Australian festival circuit.

Companies either invited by one of the cities or else visiting under their own steam were turning their noses to play the Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne (Moomba) and Sydney festivals in quick succession. Despite Sharman, it's still a good enough play for the Black Theatre Of Prague and Stephen Berkoff's London Theatre Group to include most of the "circuit" in their 1982 Australian tour.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
* "BARNUM" will be 1982's
* box office HIT in
* Adelaide, Sydney and
* Melbourne!"

The AUSTRALIAN — Jan. 15

Written by Peter Turrini. The American Musical Theatre from the 1840s to Richard

Cooper High Priority Project

REG LIVERMORE

BARNUM

THE GIGANTIC SMASH-HIT MUSICAL
WITH A COMPANY OF
50 ACTORS, SINGERS, DANCERS
& FULL ORCHESTRA



SYDNEY

MELBOURNE

Regent Theatre

March 4 — June 3
Counter Bookings at Regent &
all Mitchell's Bass outlets.
GROUP BOOKINGS: Ph. 267 3211

Her Majesty's Theatre

from June 16
Group Booking Enquiries: Ph. 654 1914



Charting her own path to stardom is the unoppressed irrepressible *Robyn Archer*

by Michael Le Moignan

Work is Robyn Archer's favourite four-letter word: she delivers it with a vehemence other people normally reserve for the other four-letter words. She believes in "work for the sake of the work" rather than work for the sake of the rewards.

She drives herself hard, with exceptional energy and enthusiasm. As I am, after a full day of TV, radio and press interviews, she was unfailingly good humoured about the prospect of packing and flying to Melbourne for more of the same in four days.

Currently completing a national tour of two soloconcerts, one of Brecht songs and one of her own favourites, she is more than ever conscious of the Australian public's regard and affection for her work, and conscious of the responsibilities involved in occupying "an amazingly privileged position".

Singers, she feels, have been more

able than most women to break through the barriers set up by a patriarchal system. Personally, she is unoppressed and undiscriminated against, politically she is feminist and socialist, but as an artist her problem is to make a clear statement while managing a sense of ambivalence. There are no absolutes. "The answer is that there is no answer!" She quotes Brecht in support of her belief that it is necessary to attack corruption while remaining fiercely humanistic. Even Margaret Thatcher, in many ways "an inexcusable woman", is a product and a victim of the patriarchy.

Her year of world travel has left her more determined than ever to chart her own course through the minefield of the mass-marketing machinery of popular and financial success. London gave her an opportunity to start again from the grass-roots, in a way she couldn't have

done in Australia. It was a chastening process for the ego but also a process of regeneration.

She and her producer-manager, Dr Manson, re-opened the Drill Hall Theatre in Tottenham with a Park 101 show, which played to 98% capacity, was received rapturously by the critics from *The Times* and *The Guardian*, Irving Wardle (see Feb 1A) and Michael Billington, and became the subject of a leading article in the trade newspaper, *The Stage*. She is surprised about undue reliance on public subsidies, and her view was borne out by the response of the Australian High Commission in London, who offered a £100 guarantee against loss the day after the show closed.

A number of solo performances at London's National Theatre brought her into contact with the flourishing UK fringe theatre, for which she has the highest admiration.

There is, she says, no equivalent in Australia for the vast pool of talented and capable performers, writers and stage technicians, prepared to work for a pittance for something they believe in. "In Australia, everyone's comfortable, in London, everyone's hungry, but they don't care!" Our own theatre "needs a backhouse, there's the potential here but where is it? There's no middle ground in Australia between Chicago and people buggering around in Woolloomooloo."

Ideally, she would like to do something more "up the alley", political cabaret for small audiences, but it seems unlikely that her own following will allow it. She returns to London in May to mount a production of her spectacular one-woman-show, *A Star Is Born*, first at Stratford East, with a likely transfer to the West End.

In October, the Sydney Theatre Company will put on her play, *The Conquest of Climate Manxola*, which she describes as "Rock Conquer Rule with ten bananas on your head." Another play, *If Magazine*, about Losanna de Medea, which examines the whole area of arts sponsorship and subsidy, has been commissioned by Normand for next year.

The work goes on, the energy and commitment are astonishing. Of the present year, she says "Some of it will be good, some will be shitehouse and some will be interesting. You can't ask more out of life than that. Can you?"

SIGNAL DRIVER

PATRICK WHITE, and director, NEIL ARMFIELD discuss *SIGNAL DRIVER* with GUS WORBY



TIMES: 9.15 am — a Thursday
PLACE: A theatre library — an almost triangular room. No windows. There is a large scrubbed table at the centre. Six chairs.

PW: What are we early? We sit at the table and discuss the questions that might be asked. "Yes. Yes. Well, I couldn't answer that. Maybe Ned..." Neil Armfield arrives.

GW: *Signal Driver* is more than just a new play, or a new Patrick White play. It is the opening gambit for Lighthouse and an important element in Jim Sharman's Festival. Can you talk about the play in both contexts?

NA: Well, the play shouldn't be forgotten... as a new play. It is obviously very important for Jim's company and for Jim's Festival, and I think it probably needs to be seen in relation to a tradition of productions of Patrick's plays that Jim has established — magnificent productions which gave an authority and a theatrical understanding to Patrick's writing. Although I haven't seen any other production of Patrick's plays than Jim's, I think it's clear that they did allow Patrick's work to be heard and to have an impact which has been a major landmark in Australia's theatrical history. And I think beginning with a play by Patrick does set a standard for the Company which has been a kind of guiding influence in Jim's approach to repertoire. Patrick is rarely seen in relation to a tradition in Australian writing, when in fact there is a very strong tradition — going into Dorothy Hewett and Louis Nowra and, I believe, Stephen Sewell — of Australian writers who look at relationships in terms of a much broader and wider context than the immediate surface of social interaction, who see figures in a landscape and see an interaction between the landscape, a society, a setting and what's going on between people. It's been called an epic style. I'm not sure what the best word for it is, but it certainly allows a breadth and a statement which is extremely broad in its scale and its scope.

GW: That is in relation to Jim's season. What about in the Festival itself, in the way the Festival seems to be shaped?

NA: I don't know a lot of the work that is in the Festival, but having seen some video clips of the Pina Bausch Company, and having looked at a book of Edward Hopper's paintings, there certainly is, in Pina Bausch, a very

strong feeling of usual — of the way that actions from the real world are taken theatrically and then exploded, exposed, developed. In rehearsal yesterday we were talking about ritual in *Sign of Times*, and that there is a very strong feeling on the one hand of theatrical ritual and — a kind of theatrical history for me, in the Chorus of the play, who are two Beings. And there's a feeling that the platform on which the play happens — the kind of plinth, almost, on which the two human characters stand — is like a "tabula rasa" in which we look at certain human social rituals which are conditioned by age, by sex, by relationships, by expectation and by the condition of the stage and the history of the country in which they're living.

GW: Patrick, have you any comments to make about that?

PW: No. I find it very difficult to talk about my plays, or anything I write, because I put down what comes up. And I suppose a lot of it comes out of my unconscious, although of course you have to use your reason too, in the end, when you sift it. But usually I think it's an act of the unconscious, really.

NA: We were talking about this yesterday. That, Patrick, is what you see as the beginning point for a work of art. You do call *Sign of Times* "a tragedy play for the times" and — it seems very evident, particularly in the years since Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister, that you have been more and more conscious and vocal about the social role of the arts — well, the social role of any person in society — and the need to look and understand the world. I was wondering, how much *Sign of Times* is an expression of wanting to say something very clearly about Australia?

PW: Yes, all through, but not directly. Most obliquely than directly. It's not a propaganda play or anything like that. It has been described as a play about three generations of Australians, I suppose. But it isn't that at all. It's really about the decay of Australian society as reflected in two characters — a man and a woman, husband and wife, from about 1920 to the present. And you get three plays in their lives. There's the youthful early-married days, the dangerous metropolitan middle, and old age — the summing up of their lives together. And — well,

you see the way society has gone in Australia. I see it as pretty chaotic and wracked, in spite of all the great boshola we are given all the time. Although I don't think it is an unduly pessimistic play, do you?

NA: No, I don't.

PW: I can't say that I'm an optimist (laughs) But there's a lot of comedy in it.

NA: There's a great deal of comedy. One of the things that interests me in the 30 years that the play spans is that the first two acts are both set after quite major events and vastly changing incidents in Australia's history — the two world wars. The first act is suffused with an innocence, a youth, but which is also scarred by the war. One of the characters, Theo, has returned from the First World War, and his way of talking, his way of thinking, his way of relating, is all conditioned by his experience of war. By the time we come to the second act, which is after the Second World War, we feel a country that is very much in the hands of economic and social forces beyond the world, or beyond the immediate world in history, of the "soft-couple", the human couple of the play. And there is a feeling of where Australia itself, with these characters as representatives of the country, maybe, at large, of where Australia itself has gone in the 20th century. By the time we get to 1980, the world seems quite inhuman — the world surrounding the people. But, strangely, the people themselves, the characters, seem to grow in humanity as the play develops, and the last act is an exquisite picture of two human beings alone in a hostile and angry world.

GW: Can I pick up two points? Ned has already started to tease one of them. You seem to manage to work through corruption to a state beyond it — to some positive statement about a notion of beauty, particularly in love. And I gather from what Ned is saying that again this play pursues that course, that it revolutionises. Is that right?

PW: Well, I see that in the end you have two very parallel to each other

(small laugh) — to hang on to those small mercies. For instance, there is a catastrophe in the play. Theo is a cabinet maker, and when he comes back from the war he's pretty shattered by life in the trenches, but he has — he says they won't "visions", they will be real,

they were "pictures" of a "table that I felt I had to make". It is a kind of great kitchen table that will last forever. And in the end, after they've gone through all sorts of difficulties in their relationship and changes in society, when they are old and in some sense rather senile, this kitchen table crops up, and Ivy says something about — I forget what she says, actually (laughs) — but the kitchen table is still there. And it's showing they have between them, and she looks at his hand and she sees the same scars on his hands, the scars and stings that they had on that kitchen table. She refers to it as, "that kitchen table you were going to make for me." And he says, "But I did and it's still there." And then she realises, and looks at his hands, and she won't really admit to her love because she is a rather grudging character, and she goes off and refers again to "my darling table", instead of him.

GW: So love is a table, as it has always been?

PW: Well, it's something that can — it doesn't always — it can endure.

GW: And the second point, in that comic sensibility within the play. How does it manifest itself?

NA: It often involves itself in people being nasty to each other (laughs). Well, there are different kinds of comedy. It is often satiric, and some of the funniest moments of the play are the sparring that occurs between the two bairns. But also there is the enchanting commentary from the two characters of the Chorus who seem to be in touch with the kind of all-knowing, all-seeing capabilities that can walk down and place the action and the behaviour of the human beings in some kind of context, and the kind of momentary bairness, sarcasm of the humans, and the violence of their relationship is conditioned very strongly by the kind of glass that comes from the vision of the two Beings, looking on — compassionate and amused.

GW: That takes us to another question that you wanted to ask — about the role of the two Beings.

NA: Yes. I was going to ask Patrick where the Beings come from inside him, and if they have a predecessor in his work in either the novels or plays?

PW: (pauses) I don't think so. I wanted to have a chorus, who are two — they're presented really as

earthly "deos" but as supernatural beings that can shift back and forth and into the future in their movements, as well as keeping an eye on the present. One minute someone shoots up to settle something between the Great Shake and the Aborigines, in the past, and the next minute they know what's going to happen in the future. And — what the about the Beings? That sounds like something I arranged very deliberately (laughs).

GW: You obviously have a good relationship with your subconscious PW: (laughs) Yes, they come out of it, more or less, in the beginning — out of my subconscious. I also was rather frustrated some years ago. I was asked to give a composer ideas for an opera and I gave him the idea. But he was rather horrified because he wanted something safe and Romantic — I think. Not something which would get him into trouble, and perhaps not be done by an established opera company. So that troubled a bit with me. And some of these ideas, and I suppose the chorus part of it, belonged to that area, when I was asked for the opera idea. And I think it is either operatic — the play — with lots of songs in it and chants.

PW: And structurally, Patrick has described the play as a chamber work, and it does feel like there are four voices that it tries speak together — that are always advancing a kind of personal and character front — but also are in touch with the broader structure of the play. And you continually feel the play moving forward through the four characters in motion, or in harmony, or in solo pieces, but you're continually brought back to musical terms in describing the quality of the play.

GW: Maybe you could talk at this point about the setting of the play. Not so much the imaginative setting but the physical setting — the way in which it will operate in this space.

PW: (long pause — glasses exchanged, smiles) Well, we didn't want to talk about this, but it probably connects. The immediate setting of the play is a public transport shelter in a landscape. The landscape changes around the shelter and the shelter itself is set in a theatre. Characters come from the theatre and move up into the performance space, and there is an immersion element in the play to link the theatrical and the audience space, in a gesture which goes to the heart of the

play's direction, and the concerns which touch every character in the play. And that is that, despite the kind of pettiness that our lives are filled with, the play is very much in touch with something beyond us. This isn't presented as some kind of mystification, but it's located in relation to the human imagination. Patrick already talked about love, about the feeling that there is something that's maybe greater than us which is difficult to understand, but the force of which can be felt. In that sense, it's — well, I suppose a kind of historically Romantic "sense". Not that the play is looking at the world through any kind of one-coloured glasses. Nor is it in any way sentimental. But there is a feeling of a force behind human beings, and behind the world which gives us a standard and a context for action.

GW: In terms of theatrical locale, then, and seeing the work evolve over a lifetime, we're talking about a progression from the courts of the mind, through the suburbs of the imagination, to the shelter of love.

NA: Very clever (general laughter) I think.

GW: That's quite a lot about the play. Could we talk about the people involved in the production and the collaboration so far?

NA: Well, it's been a marvellous project to be involved with, because I have been able to talk to Patrick a great deal about the play from when he first finished writing it.

PW: Yes.

NA: Patrick has been involved in discussions with the designer and the composer. We talked a great deal for many months about casting. It has evolved on a very broad front, and each of the artists who have been involved in drawing the production into a theatrical shape have all taken a great deal of time to think about the play and Patrick's work.

GW: Patrick, Neil's talked about the benefits of collaboration from his point of view, can you talk about that generation period as well? Obviously in one sense the writing has taken place over a lifetime, but has it now come to you quickly? Or in odd places, at odd times, as it appears here either of your

PW: No, no, it did come quite quickly. Though I couldn't say how quickly it came (laughs) I can't remember

exactly when I wrote it. I suppose about a year ago. So much happens so quickly when you're old. You can't remember when you did something. I have re-written the first act quite a bit — just recently, before I came here — which I think has improved it. It is a much more revised play than others I've written, I think. But at the same time I like to think that it's very visual. Certainly I've been lucky in getting Stephen Curtis as a designer, he's done marvellous designs for it, and Carl Vinc, I think, has great understanding of what it's about. I haven't heard an awful lot of his work. I heard the music for *Poppet*, and — what else? — oh, some of the shorter ballads he did for *Greene Murphy*, I think it was. But on the whole I haven't heard an awful lot, but I have been very impressed by the — he doesn't say an awful lot, but you feel he's very much in tune with the play, very sensitive to the words of it, so that's a good thing when it comes to composing the music for the songs. I haven't had any dealings with most of the actors before *Only Kidding*. *She* was in a film Jim did from one of my stories.

GW: *The Night The Promised*...

PW: Yes, and since then we've seen quite a lot of each other and I know her voice very well, and it was easy to write something for her. I had seen Melissa Jaffer in some film roles and been impressed by her (and had always been very sorry that she gave up the theatre for some time and that she's come back in this). Oh, Peter Gammons I've seen in film roles and liked him in those *John Wood* I've only seen in *Laika*, in a part which I didn't think gave him much opportunity, but I think he's going to be very good in this. Those are the main things about the people who are working on it. Oh, and Neil (laughs). I have admired as a director over several plays I've seen him do *Jesus of the Island*, which I thought was terrific. *The Eyes of the Fawn*. I haven't seen the latest one, which sounds possibly the best thing he's done, *Wifecomes the Bright World*.

GW: In your self-portrait you talk fondly, but I think movingly, about Neil's generation, and Jim's generation...

PW: Yes.

GW: as those who might be your spiritual children. That obviously pleases you.

PW: Well... I'd wish for there a world free from nuclear war, chiefly, because there's going to be no more plays, no more anything, if we're not very careful. And that, to me, is the issue which concerns me most nowadays, and which I try to do something about. Ah... and I think there will be more and more theatre and film about that issue. At least I hope there will be, without turning it into propagandist stuff... I think there is an increasing need to say something in plays, not just to produce elegant nothing, which some theatres tend to do. Without naming them (conversational laughter).

NA: I have been fairly public and loud, during my time at Narroo, about... well, a shared feeling with Patrick, that it is essential that our theatre reflects how we live our lives in the world, and comments on the way we live, and maybe helps us to confront life when we leave the theatre. I certainly share the feeling that the theatre, that any art, has the responsibility to look at, and to interpret, the world. Speaking about the inheritance that you mentioned from Patrick, I think that there's no question that there's been no greater writer and no greater influence in the history of Australian literature. Patrick's work is a huge monument to human spirit and to art, and to the power of the artist to interpret the world, and there's no greater challenge to respond to than the achievement of Patrick's life.

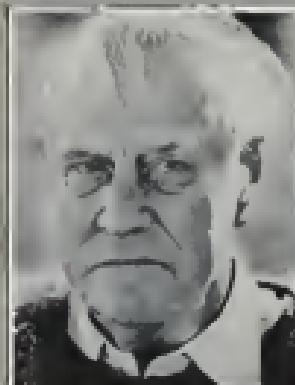
GW: Perhaps Patrick should have the last word. It seems that you've been coming home to the theatre for a long time. As a young man you existed on the periphery of it, wanting to find a way into it.

PW: Yes

GW: Hadn't you 20 years ago, and now have come back with a youthful enthusiasm, and preparedness for it... Is that true?

PW: Well... if someone takes an interest in my plays. For a long time, not many people did. The Adelaide Theatre Guild did, years ago. And then John Squire did a couple of my plays. But it wasn't until Jim Sharman took me up as a playwright, and saw things that he wanted to bring out, that I was really encouraged to write for the theatre. And since then I have written a couple of plays, *Big Tree* and this one, *Signal Driver*... and I would like to write some more.

PATRICK WHITE-PLAYWRIGHT



1943 Born, London. Educated Australia including Kings School, Cranbrook, Tasmania.

1945 Returned to UK, Cheltenham College. Wanted to become an actor.

1949 Australia, working as jackeroo, writing poetry, sketches.

1952 Kings College, Cambridge.

1953 Plays performed at Bryant's Playhouse, Sydney.

1955 Graduated Cambridge. Sketches and lyrics for revues arranged by Herbert Forrester and others at Little and Gilt Theatre, London. Remained in UK; during war was Intelligence Officer with RAF.

1956 Return to Australia staged Belton's Theatre, London. While on *Wilfred Dibell* in Australia.

1967 *The Last Face* published.

1968 White returned to Australia to live permanently.

1969 The 1962 Adelaide Festival Committee rejected *The Last Face* as "unsellable" for the Festival. Adelaide University Theatre Guild produced the play.

1972 *A Cherry Soul* published. Premiere of *The Seafarers of Sarapapille* by AUTG and also performed by Unioa Theatre Company in Melbourne. *The Last Face* produced by Elizabethan Theatre Trust in Sydney and Twelfth Night, Brisbane.

1974 AUTG produced *Scenes of Sarapapille*. For Sydney UTBC performed *A Cherry Soul* in Melbourne.

1976 AUTG premiered *A Night on Bald Mountain*. Publication of *Four Plays*. Nobel Prize for Literature.

1978 Revival of interest in White's stage work with Jim Sharman's production of *The Seafarers of Sarapapille* for the Old Tote, Sydney.

1979 *Brave Big Tree* which Sharman directed for Old Tote. Production toured to Melbourne.

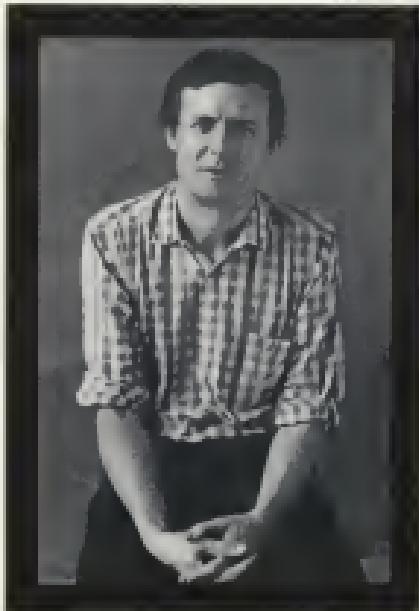
1980 *Big Tree* published. Currency Press Film of *The Night The Hunter* released, directed by Sharman for which White wrote the screenplay.

1982 Sharman's production of *A Cherry Soul* for interim Sydney Theatre Company.

1983 *Brave Big Tree*.

1982 Premiere of *Signal Driver* for Adelaide Festival by State Theatre Company of South Australia, directed by Neil Ascford.

The World of **DAVID HARE**



Major British playwright David Hare is here to direct the world premiere of his latest play, *A Map Of The World*, for the Sydney Theatre Company at the Adelaide Festival. He talks to Wayne Harrison

David Hare paces about the Sydney Theatre Company office like an expectant father. This makes the pregnant receptionist uneasy, but gives everyone else a chance to roll out their "birth of a play" clichés. The sun has returned to Sydney and the office is firing apart with summer indecence. David is frenetic by comparison and comments wryly on "the brown bodies,

everywhere I look." Delikatly bath this

There are unusual complications. Forcibly appear necessary to extract Roshan Seth, the Indian actor playing the novelist Victor Mekka in *A Map Of The World*, from New Delhi and get him to Sydney so that rehearsals may begin. The eighty-seventh attempt at

contacting him by phone succeeds and he's on a QANTAS flight from Borobudur as long as his internal flight connects. It runs four hours late of course, and QF1 departs sans Seth. More pacing about the office and contemplation of irony. "See what happens when you write a play about internal class in India?", says a well-known English playwright. The one bright spot in a trying week

Greg Chappell's seventh duck

I use the clause 'the critics has caused to steal the following interview. During it David reveals two things: biographical details and *A Map Of The World* details. "I go to the theatre to be surprised," he says. "You can't destroy the mystery by revealing the play beforehand." Nevertheless, certain information is making its way to the press — and Penguin Australia will release the playtext prior to the world premiere at the Adelaide Festival.

Still, respecting the author's wishes, I'll restrict information on the play to the Festival program synopsis: "Set against the background of a UNESCO conference in India, *A Map Of The World* centres on a confrontation between a brilliant, cynical, Oxford-educated Indian intellectual (played by Seth) and a passionately committed young English journalist (Robert Griffiths). An American woman, Peggy Wharfin (Penelope Downie) becomes the trigger for an ideological showdown that plays the world's problems against the protagonists' highly charged emotional stakes."

David claims he's having difficulty interesting Australian journalists in a play about a conference on poverty, but adds that attention is guaranteed once he mentions that the cast and crew are "flying in" from all over the world. Indeed, the "internationalism" of the production is impressive, with the Australian majority being joined by Seth, Sheila Scott-Watkinson from America, Keele West from West Germany, co-designer Haydn Griffin and lighting designer Barry Dempster, both from England. And Hare, of course, who will also direct the STC production.

As for biographical details, a Cambridge graduate, David Hare is the author of *Slag, Knuck, Fumble, Tuck 'n' Solder* and *Fleety* for the theatre, and *Descent Of Living* and *Living Rain* for television. In the late sixties, he co-founded Portable Theatre with Tony Benn, and in the same way that 18th century touring players constructed a circuit of towns they could successfully revisit, this company created a new network of regional outlets, mainly in university towns where they could recruit a new type of theatre, a theatre of physical expression designed for an audience brought up on

a television/rock concert diet. "The idea was to take theatre to places where it normally didn't go," Hare has said. "We weren't to see that a variety of arts centres and groups would spring up to accommodate that. But when we started we played many army camps and bare floors that we were playing by the end."

It was during the Portable Theatre days that Hare commenced his long association with Howard Bretherton and Trevor Griffiths. With Bretherton in particular he has had exceptional success, having co-written *Brazenhead* with him (1973) and directed his *Wagons Of Happiness* (1978) at the National. The rise from "army camps and bare floors" to the comparative splendours of Britain's National Theatre by a group of left-wing playwrights is surely one of the modern theatre's most extraordinary phenomena, with middle-class audiences "welcoming" those writers who said in 1972: "Our aggression is extremely conscious, it stems from a basic contempt for people who go to the theatre. It gets worse when we get near population centres. (We) loathe most people as individuals and, worse, find people particularly obnoxious. But the aggressions aren't entirely egocentric. We want to pick the medium of theatre and shake it by the scruff of its neck." Having shaken it for over a decade, David Hare now prepares to infiltrate the Adelaide Festival Centre and the Sydney Opera House. What was the fuss?

"I was asked to Australia," he says, "by Jim Sharman, who was speculating that if he invited me out, I might write a play. I said that he certainly couldn't rely on it, but if he wanted to gamble the Adelaide Festival's money he could. When I first came out last October, Jim was keen that I write about Australia, but on six weeks acquaintance that seemed to me an impertinence. And so, my way of writing a play about Australia is to write about the subject Australians least want to know about, the Third World. Australians find it difficult to take the eye of the world seriously, and I think Elspeth Darcy (the Australian co-designer of *A Map Of The World*) got it best when he said that many Australians come here to escape from the rest of the world."

Mid A Map Of The World two weeks

How from for some now?

Not really. I'd written a great deal about England, over seven or eight years — with time-out for *Fleety* — writing my "decline of England" plays. There were about the various states of despond in the country I found myself in, and the reasons for it. I passed through a stage where the critics accused me of being hysterical, of exaggerating England's problems, to a stage where I was accused of merely repeating what other people had been saying for quite some time — i.e., I had passed from hysteria to cliché without missing through any middle stage. It was time for a change. I also felt that with *Fleety*, a play that has not been seen in Australia, I'd ended that phase of my work. *Fleety* is an understatement of this phase. And so I spent 12 months in America, and was determined not to write until I felt moved to do so. The result is *Saigon*, about the fall of Vietnam — my American play — which Thames Television will produce later this year. The experience of having been in South East Asia many years ago suddenly became a focus of interest. Then Australia, India and *Map*.

*What sort of research did the *Map* result?*

People are very shocked if you admit this in public, but I have a sort of disdain for research. Well, I think there is a certain research which is useful, but any writer who is worth anything at all is going to guess, and guesswork is actually the basis of writing plays, not going out with a tape recorder. And it has been my experience that whenever you guess intelligently you find your guesswork corroborated. So it was with *Map*. I would conceive the events and the atmosphere as I would like them to be, and then I would show it to people at the United Nations, to journalists from the Third World, or to Africa experts in England. They sort of mused things about, but basically they confirmed the accuracy of the guesswork. If you can't guess, you shouldn't be writing.

Does your broadening of subject matter represent a general trend in British theatre?

No, no. Writers don't consciously move together. It's up to people on the outside to say "Oh this or that is going

er" and "Writers are moving here or there." Your own history is much more personal. Critics, or people who write about your work believe as if you have a lot of choice in the matter. They say "Why doesn't he do that?" or "What we want is more plays about that?" But you don't actually have any choice. The bracket goes down and sometimes it will come up with bold, vivid, and sometimes with clear, fresh water. You just find you are drawn towards what you sense are rich areas. The minute I thought about the forms I knew that I'd in this incredibly rich patch that just suited me as a writer. I love everything about the theatre: the secrecy, the clothes, the look, the way people went off to die, the passion and the sense of continuity. I just knew I'd be happy there. Similarly, I knew that Saigon during the false peace was the kind of city I could write about. You get the instinct, you proceed, and the process of writing a play, as Victor Melina says in May, is the process of discovering what you believe. How you find that rich patch to graze on is a sort of mystery, and to analyse it would not be helpful. It wouldn't be helpful to me as a writer to know why I chose particular subjects.

How would you describe the position of the playwright in England today?

I think we're very lucky. From living abroad I've had a great sense of how lucky we are, in that even if it is an illusion you feel yourself to be in the centre of something, you feel the nation is interesting, that your contribution to the debate about England has some currency. Having spent time in America I am aware that theatre there is completely peripheral. Americans go out for an evening of entertainment, to touch success. They don't want to listen to what the playwright has to say. But in England, because the country is self-deluding, because we are getting poorer and unhappier and we don't know why, we are willing to listen to any fool who has some suggestions about why this might be. So there's a certain attentiveness in the theatre if you write about contemporary subjects, and people come wanting, actually wanting to listen. They respect your seriousness and therefore you're incredibly privileged in that you never have to where in the marketplace. The way we playwrights have discussed

England in the last 20 years has had an effect on the way everybody reacts about it, the newspapers, the way it's been abroad. From abroad English playwrights are sort of quoted like our cricket team.

Is the rise in prominence of the British playwright to be explained totally in terms of social inevitability?

It's mysterious. There is absolutely no doubt that anybody under 40 of any talent who wanted to write or express themselves artistically in England chose public form, the theatre or television, whereas that certainly isn't true in America or here where there are still great novelists. Your novelists are much better than ours, you still have some sense of private work being valuable. In England the novel is a non-existent form and why that I don't understand. What I do know is that a general mood of self-doubt is immensely helpful in getting a hearing.

What about the audience of contemporary theatre audiences like the National by radicals?

Both Howard Brenton and I, who, by the way, have been writing at completely different directions since 1975, always felt that the only way of writing about our two times was on a large scale, which has meant epic plays. Plays that move from scene to scene, place to place, time to time, that are free on stage and involve showing the whole society. However, if you attempt to show the whole society, inevitably you find yourself in need of a Shakespearean sized company, able to portray, as Shakespeare did, King, Lords, Higher Bourgeoisie, Lower Bourgeoisie, Peasants, Workers. To write about social things you need a company that size. And you need places with resources that can accommodate epic plays, in big theatre companies. And so these big theatre companies have been founded for the purposes of the writers.

I might add, however, that I have never joined in the criticism of those people who come to the theatre. I'm grateful for whatever comes. I hope they're going to listen. I've never thought, "Ugh, what a horrible load of people!" Similarly, I've never had a complaint against the English theatre. My plays have always gone on. It is my wish, however, that I could get more people to come and see my works

Certain factors have presented this opportunity for dissemination of news of my work on the opinions of people who often misappropriate my work. These people are called critics, and they have let me down very badly. I am bitter about this. And while it is true that the writers have lost the theatre institutions, one is often at their mercy. It's very difficult to present epic theatre outside these buildings, but these institutions lack the energy to find the working-class audiences — and they combat any suggestions you make to try and co-opt new audiences.

If that has been the role of drama as the foundation of your epic theatre?

The contribution that Hayden Griffin has made to that role of my work has been tremendous, in that he gave me my eyes. I learnt from him how to run scenes in a way that enables you to truly compare them, which is a very difficult thing to do in the theatre. For example, if you say Scene One, America and Scene Two, Russia, people think that the audience is automatically going to connect. But it doesn't. Audiences see things sequentially. The whole art of how to create a world from an evening, of how to tie all the epic strings together, I've learnt from Hayden. He is the only designer I know who picks up the text regularly. He has a wonderful sense of stage and playing space. He is also a master technician, of the type you don't have here. He understands the machinery of the stage. From what I've seen it is the greatest thing coming from the Australian theatre. Although the writers are good, and a lot of the directors are good, and many of the actors are very, very good, young writers don't get the chance to present whole worlds on stage because you've never had the designers to invent these worlds for them.

And drifts of biography?

The only thing I'd like to say is how beautiful the *Orion* looked on Sydney Harbour. My father was punter on that ship, and to come to Sydney and see it was just fantastic. It was a wonderful glimpse from my childhood because Where was my father all my life? He was in Australia or sailing back and forth on the *Orion*. Australia was simply this place where my father was and so I had this poor opinion of it. Of course, the opinion is much better now.

What's new at the Playhouse, Perth?

An announcement of a outstanding 1992 series has brought a rush for subscriptions, doubling 1991 levels in a welcome vote of confidence.

Following the triumph of *The Man from Mackinac* (commissioned 1979), the N.T.C. now world-premieres another Dorothy Hewett masterpiece — *The Fields of Heaven*.

Warren Mitchell, last cast at the Playhouse as Willy Loman, went on to worldwide acclaim in the title and now returns to star with Robyn Nevin in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Then, in late April, Perth looks forward with delight to the brilliance of Timothy West in *Uncle Vanya*, directed by Prunella Scales. It's all proof that the theater is alive and well!

National Theatre Company at the PLAYHOUSE, Perth.

3 Pier Street, Perth 6000.
Office & Subs: 325 3344.
Box Office: 325 3500.

WORLD PREMIERE SEASON

The Fields of Heaven

by Dorothy Hewett (February 10 to March 6)

Directed by Rodney Fisher

With Natalie Bate, Lex Marinos, Joan Sydney

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

by Edward Albee (March 23 to April 17)

Directed by Rodney Fisher

Starring Warren Mitchell and Robyn Nevin

Uncle Vanya

by Anton Chekhov (April 29 to May 22)

Directed by Prunella Scales

Starring Timothy West

The National Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Australia Council, the WA Arts Council, education authorities and business supporters.

SEASON ONE TREE

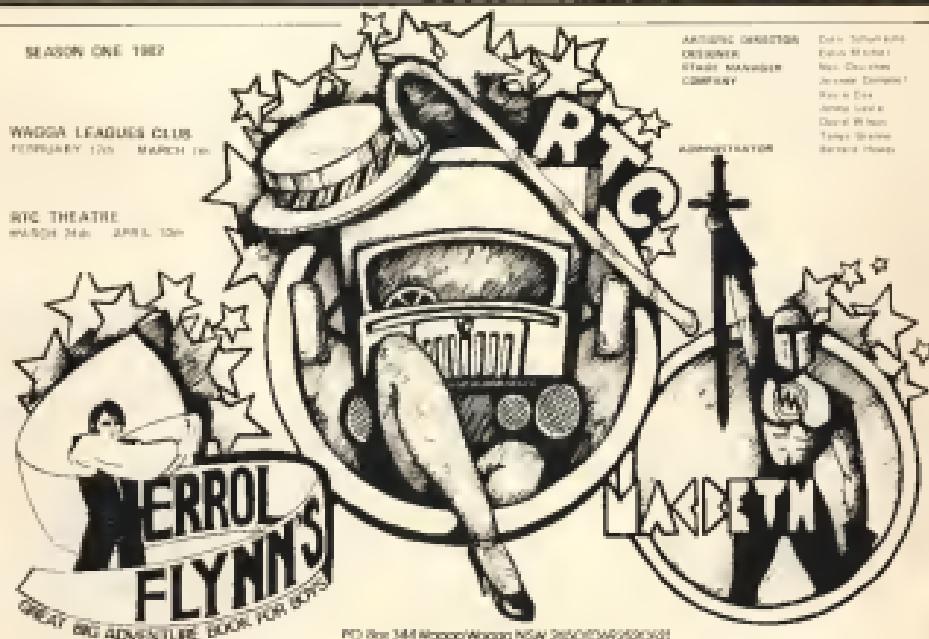
WAAPA LEAGUES CLUB
FEBRUARY 12th - MARCH 1st

RIC THEATRE
MONDAYS 7.30pm - TUESDAYS 8.00pm

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
DESIGNER
STAGE MANAGER
COMPANY

Cast: - Tiffani Kirby
Elaine Mallett
Kris Chauhan
Jennifer Domingo
Peter H. Davis
Janette Lavelle
David Hobson
Tanya Straker
Bernard Hayes

ADMINISTRATION



P.O. Box 344 Wagga Wagga NSW 2650 (069) 2520303

GETTING THROUGH '82

All subsidised theatre companies face funding cut-backs this year. CATHY PEAKE spoke to the major companies to compile this report on their attitudes to and strategies for coping with their straitened circumstances.

So far, members of the major companies to cuts in funding from the Australia Council to the Theatre Board for 1982 range from the severe to the nearly negligible.

Despite some additional money being released to the Board, and hence to the theatres (see info), most are keyed to the responses of their respective State Governments and to the business, or otherwise of last year's box office.

But if the general mood around the country is one of determined survival and subsidised optimism, it also seems clear that while the 1982 seasons will consume more or less as they were planned before the cuts were announced, there is considerable apprehension on the part of directors about the expansion of their companies' creative resources and their investment in future work.

Basically, the effect of the cuts has been an increased work load for smaller numbers of staff, and severe restrictions on the time and resources which, in a less than financial climate, would be devoted to the development of new plays, community programmes, and skills within the resident company.

No money in the kitty, or the

attrition of reserves accumulated last year, means that it is difficult to commission works, budgets are shorter and the risks of experiment are greatly increased.

All of the major companies report that they are now seeking private sector support more aggressively, though it is strongly felt that this is more readily forthcoming to the prestigious national opera and ballet companies. No internal economies are at the process of reconstruction. Salaries of permanent staff, workshops, the number of plays produced and the general marketing approach of the companies have all been affected.

And since it is clear that theatre programs cannot be tailored to court the multi-national, the major concern is to build up paying audiences at the box-office.

The National Theatre, for instance, has redesigned its brochure along more commercial lines in a bid for larger audiences, whilst the Sydney Theatre Company has increased its top ticket prices to \$13.90 and has added a Wednesday matinee performance.

The Playbox system engineered by the Playbox Theatre, whilst not an

initiative for this season, has been stepped up, and the Perth Playhouse is now looking for corporate subscriptions.

But the situation does vary very markedly from state to state. At opposite ends of the spectrum, perhaps, are the relative numbers of the State Theatre of South Australia and the Melbourne Theatre Company, though the efforts both are making to increase revenue and cut costs are typical.

Adelaide is fortunate since its major funding (75%) comes from the State Government. Even there, however, whilst programming has not been affected, and the innovation of playing in repertory with a company of 12 actors will go ahead, the scale and scope of productions have been affected.

Plans to include a number of musicians in productions throughout the season have had to be reduced, individual productions overture have been tailored and four vacant positions among the permanent staff have not been re-filled. Other members of the administrative staff have had to be released in the public service.

Whilst the company had tried to

avert the impact of the cuts on the creative areas, plans for a country tour of one production have been shelved and it is felt that the hidden risks of the importunate innovation — with fewer shows and longer seasons — have been greatly increased.

The Melbourne Theatre Company has already moved into the fund-raising area in a considerable way. The Friends of the MTC — set up the year before last — continues to hold monthly programs, a fund-raising consultant has been employed, and a special sub-committee of the Board has been formed specifically to make approaches to industry.

As is the case with the other



QTC — longer seasons and no outside actors or directors

companies, the toll on the time and energies of the company is felt to be considerable. As well as getting on with the business of mounting productions, the creative staff is now required to spend time trying to stimulate interest within the business community

The National Manager of the Performing Arts

THEATRE AUSTRALIA

is looking for a junior typist/clerk to act as

SUBSCRIPTIONS MANAGER and secretary. We need someone efficient, out-going, good on the phone and with people and preferably with an interest in the performing arts.

Apply: Theatre Australia, 1st Floor, 151 Dowling Street, Posts Point NSW 2011.

Or phone (02) 157 1200.

Applications close April 1, 1982.

PLAYHOUSE

MTC

MTC — fund-raising in a considerable way

through activities which can only be regarded as peripheral.

The MTC will stage only two large-scale productions this year and whilst, as with the other companies, the Australian content of their season has not been affected, programming has been tailored to plays involving smaller numbers of actors and simpler sets.

Two plays have been dropped altogether, which means the added risk

and say they can no longer afford to have outside directors and interstate actors. A second resident designer and director have not been appointed, as was planned, and their Tangent Productions — devoted entirely to Australian works — has been truncated from four to two plays this year.

One alternative open to the companies and adopted by the Playbox, Nimrod and the STC is the creation of second venue activity where it is hoped that commercially oriented seasons will generate additional revenue. The Playbox is currently touring Steven Berkoff, the Nimrod will stage both *Curdvoie* and *Death of a Salesman*, with Warwick Mitchell, at the Seymour Centre this year, and the STC has taken the unprecedented step of hiring the Theatre Royal for five months and has, in total, programmed nine months of



Nimrod — two commercial shows and a bid for larger audiences.

of longer seasons for the remaining productions, and a 'Theatre Campaign', where patrons will be asked to donate money and books in the foyer, has been set up.

In a similar reaction, the Queensland Theatre Company have increased each of their seasons by five performances



STC — top ticket prices now \$13.90 and nine months of extra activity

additional theatre activity, feeling that the solution to current pressures is to be bolder rather than more tentative.

That decision is gamble with the need for bigger audiences, allied to the decision to maintain programming integrity and commitment to Australian playwrights is widespread, if uneasy. Despite the problem of raising sufficient capital from the private sector to make the Challenge Grant Scheme viable, no-one is panicking — yet.

Next month we look at the response and tactics of the smaller theatre companies to Getting Through '82.

A CELEBRITY BALL

A Gala Theatrical Dinner Dance!

A glittering evening for
wining, dining and dancing is
to be held by the Australian
National Playwrights'
Conference in honour of its
10th Anniversary and in aid of
its diminishing funds.

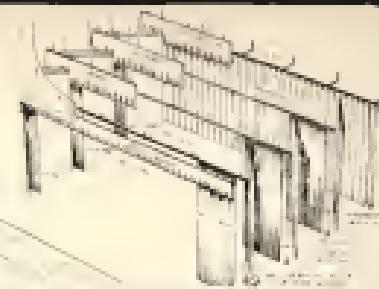
At Paddington Town Hall,
Friday April 2nd, 8p.m.

**AN OCCASION YOU
CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS!**

Everyone who is anyone
will be there. . .

Tickets a mere \$40 per head to
wine, dine and dance, see and
be seen.

Enquiries:
ANPC Administrator,
Clem German, on
(02) 367 2109



FOR ALL YOUR STAGE REQUIREMENTS

CURTAINS - Designed and made

STIMES - Office and Conference

PULL-OUT - Designed and made

ALSO - Projection screens, wall cladding

PLUS - Fire retardation, repairs and
service, dry cleaning (curtains)



(02) 560 7899

internet inquiries@ Rakell.com

1982
SEASON ONE



POLYGON THEATRE COMPANY

1st Floor 181 Sullivans Place Hobart Tasmania 7000

(02) 34 8018

PLAY ONE



by JEROME LAWRENCE
and ROBERT E LEE

Directed by DON GAY

PLAY TWO



by BERNARD
POMEYANCE

Directed by
KEN CAMPBELL-DOBBIE

PLAY THREE



by DAVID WILLIAMSON

Directed by
JOHN UNICOMB

TASMANIA'S REGIONAL TOURING DRAMA COMPANY



U.K.

Cargo Cult — Aeschylus at the National

by Irving Wardle

In the belief of the Cargo Cult tribes that by inverting the usual order of mythical characters with pogged domes at the controls, the gifts of the white man can be induced to fall from the sky. Much the same simple faith often lies in possession of those directors in quest of the lost treasures of Greek tragedy, but rarely in such a wide as the five-hour *Orestes* which the National Theatre unveiled at the end of last year.

If Peter Hall had been tackling it at an earlier time in his career it is pretty certain that he would have sought some means of bringing Aeschylus's world closer to our but that is no longer his approach. Pre-publicity for the production constantly dwelt on the feminine aspect of the *Orestes*, but only to say that it masked the transition from matriliney to democracy at the price of women's rights! Not that any such line of thought was visible in the show itself, which

came over, as usual with Hall's recent classical work, as an act of reverence towards an approved masterpiece.

Underlying in every detail is the Cargo Cult connection that Aeschylus can best be understood through an imitation of his own theatre. The Chorus and orchestra at the NT is partly modelled on Sparta, and this resemblance has been heightened with a war-book Greek stage. Analogues for the original music and set are supplied by Hieronissi Baryshnikov's corps, which accompanies most of the scenes, and Tony Morrison's barbarously rhythmic transformation of the Greek metres into the pounding alternation of Anglo-Saxon verse. As in fifth-century Athens, the company of actors are all men, playing anonymously as masks.

Masks are central to the whole operation. According to Hall, the Greek theatre is itself a mask periodically removed (when the upstage door opens) to expose the dreadful faces of the actors, but never the dreadful acts themselves. Likewise, for the scene, masks are supposed to furnish a liberating discipline for elemental emotion. Timo Harrison, whose highly formalized text is designed to serve the same purpose, even compels the stage mask to that of a mask-welder, enabling him to look out a split that would otherwise burn his eyes out.

The main source of that theory is Hall's old colleague, Michel Saint-Denis, who taught that to wear a mask successfully is to become possessed. The actor submits to it,

and it is the mask that dictates his movements and the mask of his body that learns to speak.

No matter how magically this process may have worked for Saint-Denis, it has not worked for Peter Hall. There are one or two performances — such as the gold and silver Clytemnestras — whose voices transmit the sense of a super-personal one and whose masks obviously alter in expression according to changing events. But most of the masks have not learned to speak, and with them you find yourself identifying with the set mask and wishing he would take the thing off.

This is particularly the case with the Chorus. Making a series of spectacular entries in goryheads (at the Agamemnon), women (in Clytemnestra) and Furies (in *Antaeus*) they are subject to precise operatic discipline. Their text consists of verse paragraphs, each conforming to one emphatic rhythm and fixed traps whether the lines are distributed or delivered in unison. Marvellous care has clearly been spent on them, but enough at moments when they break out of the form — as when Clytemnestra falls into a nightmare with the clanging Furies (pallid-visaged predators in scowled drapery) — that their impact is tantalizingly repetitive. Movement is meritless mime, and all too often the very sense of the lines is muffled by the masks and accompanying rhythms. Instead of recovering a line of impersonal social importunity, you are left with Mr Baryshnikov's tone-bomb



The Chorus in the National Theatre's *Orestes* — mind-bogglingly repetitive. Photo: Nobby Clark.

existing personnel and enormous tour charts which clearly suggest that something is going down the pipeline.

The central conflict between Broadway and the loyalties of the houses based emerges in letters as high, but the style excludes detailed interaction and consideration of the single debate. It is all very clean and anorexic, and in the best of taste, qualities it would be easier to admire if only they had been called into existence to hold roughly focus in check. Royal Campbell summed up this empty cultural event in his lines about a man with a scuffle and a carb but no home.



Theatres the world over wait for the next Broadway smash-hit musical. Our US correspondent KARL LEVETT assesses:

The state of the art form

The obliquity of the Broadway musical throughout the world confirms it as the genuine American art form, one made-in-the-USA product that the wide world is waiting for. In Rio you'll see a poster with someone falling on a roof and in Holland the non-existent hills are alive with the sound of music. In London last Easter it was a sobering sight on passing the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, to see *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* playing. In that large and venerable house was a musical with terrible off-Broadway origins and one that, although risqué and pleasing, was immensely mediocre.

Well, wait no more until you see some of the other nations' comes. That's when the American musical really looks like an art form. It is an art form that is now divided into two distinct categories: the big Broadway musical where increasing with blank CAUTION signs before producers,



Jennifer Holliday, Sheryl Lee Rapp, and Lorrie Brevard in Dream Girls.

and the mini-musical found in off-Broadway houses where the intention is a matter of numbers and not creative effort. Sometimes the line of the two categories gets blurred and minuscule — *Rhythm and Blues* Playing Our Song — criss-cross to the major leagues by dint of presentation.

As evidence that music hath charm for producers, on Broadway at present of the 36 productions, there are musical entertainments of some sort. Of the 18, 11 are long runs, with *A Chorus Line* in its seventh year leading the pack.

In this race for action, causation are constant and the most important one of the season was Stephen Sondheim's *Musical By Half*. Along in tandem with Harold Prince as director, Sondheim over the last decade has been the single most important creative force in the progress of the American musical. *Musical By Half* is an adaptation of 1934 Kaufman and Hart play, a story of show-business hubris told backward. As a book for a musical, it was schematically backward and dramatically uninteresting, and the show was doomed from its unfortunate inception. The score, however, was top-level Sondheim and already Frank Sinatra and Carly Simon have recorded songs from the show. The producers is ousted but the malice may linger on. The audience is awaiting Sondheim, the American musical's resident genius, sending a couple of creative years

down the drain.

Broadway needs all the Sondheims it can get, for the musical arena has become one of extreme caution — safe and mundane material presented spectacularly. *Dreamgirls* is an obvious example. In this conservative climate it is good to know that another mid-tier and creative force, Michael Bennett, is still writing. Director-choreographer Bennett who gave us *A Chorus Line* this season has delivered *Dream Girls*. In Broadway parlance, *Dream Girls* is "blackbooked."

The musical describes the rise of a black singing group — clearly based on the Supremes, with the Diana Ross character here called Dennis Jones — and how the group fares in the big, bad world of Show Business. Although a couple of leading critics have claimed social significance for the tale, it is essentially another backstage story complete with gossips and badgers and a "the show must go on" mentality.

What it does have is the slickness and most dynamic production given to a musical in a long time. All this technology and the female mind of Michael Bennett can together create is used to drive the story along with the speed of a singing bullet. Everything seems to be on wheels — particularly when Wagner's metal light roses and bridges that form sets that practically dance to the music. Add to this the Trevor Nunn propelling computerized lighting sequences,

light years ahead of what we've so far seen. Indeed the whole look and style of the show is a technological marvel.

Happily, the players are strong enough not to be dwarfed by all this hardware. There is a huge cast that is uniformly good and presents the remarkable reservoir of black talent available in the US to be used by enterprising directors such as Michael Bennett. The stand-out is the 21 year old Jennifer Holliday as Effie, the round member of the group who is bumped when the singer homages for the what might be Ms Holliday's impassioned singing of "And I'm Telling You I'm Not Going" at the end of Act I is the stuff that Broadway legends are made of.

Dream Girls, however, has two weaknesses, at its core. The first is the structuring of Tom Ryen's book. In the second act the focus suddenly leaves interacting Effie and switches to click (Jesus) Jesus and the show stumbles and never quite recovers its impetus again. The second failing is Henry Krieger's score which creates exactly the Mjartan sound but only one of twice more above the serviceable. Krieger emphatically uses narrative quasi-operatic style, but the lack of strong individual melodies makes one suspect that perhaps technology also had a hand in wasting the score. Everything that a director could do to distract us from these inadequacies Michael Bennett has done. Flash, sash and blingy are everywhere with *Dream Girls* being distilled within an inch of its life. In production values at least this is a significant step in the progress of the Broadway musical.

After *Dream Girls* the arrival of *Little Me* seems at first to be a little flat-floored. This impression soon fades as Little Me reveals that as a musical it also has old fashioned virtues — namely, a first rate Cy Coleman score and positively cream-of-the-crop lyrics by Carolyn Leigh. First presented in 1962, *Little Me* was an adaptation of Patrick Dennis' novel and styled for the talents of comedian Ted Cladar. The book's author, Neil Simon realises, that one can split the leading male role into two with the youthful character played by Victor Garber and the older by James Coco. Neil Simon has added two new songs for his leading men with Garber in a love scene on the sinking Titanic, and Coco as a William Randolph Hearst/Citizen Kane character in his See-Saw-Saw style dinner room.

Little Me is a surreal comic book, a non-stop-craze stage example of Americans laughing at themselves (which might explain the original production's success in London). Neil Simon's one-hour style cuts the fragmented story line admirably and director Robert Doran has seen that the capable cast maintains a consistent tone of mockery. Tony Walton's lighted stage set sets are in perfect tune with the comic

Cy Coleman score and the wit of Carolyn Leigh's lyrics. In song after song (including the two new ones in this review) Carolyn Leigh demonstrates lyrics of easy-going deviousness that are a delight to hear and to chuckle over. In these pieces we have the lyrics to the star of a Broadway musical evening in an unexpected pleasure.

Off-Broadway musicals also continue to proliferate. The Off-Broadway mini-musical differs from its larger Broadway brother in being much more flexible in form and more adventurous in subject matter. William Finn's *The March of The Falafel* which examines in song the plight of a young man with a homosexual lover is just not Broadway's cup of tea.

Musically too, the smaller stages offer, often in cabaret style, sounds not heard on Broadway. One such show that has proved very popular is *Pump Boys and Dinettes*. It features what you might call country-pop or

rockabilly — a kind of accessible country and western with sharper lyrics.

We're down South in the good of boy song of *Frog Level* where the pump boys run the local gin union and the director the advertising craft. The Double Capp A series of songs tells us all about the individual characters, about living in *Frog Level*. It is a unabashed salute to downhome values, rescued by the fact that the songs (most of them by Jim Ware who's in the cast) are original and pleasing, and the presentation is first rate. Wide-eyed innocence hides hard-edged professionalism. There's authenticity plus a knowing wink, as in the song "The Night Devil Parties Was Almost Mine".

Should anyone inquire to me health, know that the American musical (both musical and man) is not actually blooming, is at least alive and happily residing in New York City.

ITI

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE
INTERNATIONAL
THEATRE INSTITUTE
153 Darling Street,
Potts Point, NSW, 2011.
Telephone: 287 1200.
Director: Martin Thibault.

FORECAST OF PARIS THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

The French Centre of the ITI has sent a list of productions coming to major Paris theatres during 1982. This list is available from the Australian Centre of the ITI. It is hoped that more countries will follow the French example.

15TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS OF THE PERFORMING ARTS (SIRMAS)

The Conference theme will be Stage Design problems of collecting, cataloguing and conserving documents. Participants invited to lectures and workshops. Further details and application form from the Australian Centre of the ITI. It will take place at the Museum of the City of New York and the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts in Lincoln Centre, August 30 — September 3, 1982.

ITI COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION AND DEFENCE OF THE RIGHTS OF THEATRE ARTISTS

Members from the following countries have been elected to the Commission: Nigeria, Sweden, United States, Venezuela, Korea, Hungary, France and India. They are working to help artists who are being persecuted in many countries.

WORLD THEATRE DAY — 27 MARCH 1982

The annual aim of World Theatre Day is to make the largest possible number of participants in order to affirm the ideals of peace and mutual understanding through theatre.

The year's celebrations should be appeals for actions "to transform some of our ideas and projects into reality", in the words of Leo of Malibor, Secretary-General of ITI in Paris. ITI Sydney will supply a page of text written by him for interested people for reading on March 27 from theatre stages in dozens of countries around Australia.

World Theatre Day was first suggested in Helsinki in 1949, and the proposal of the French Centre was adopted by acclamation at the 5th ITI Congress in Vienna in 1961. Since then, on March 27, World Theatre Day has been celebrated in 80-100 countries with messages from many world famous theatre personalities such as Eliza Somar, Helene Weigel, Arthur Miller and Peter Brook.

Theatre Reviews



A.C.T.

Never better

ANNIE

by Ken Healey

James In Thomas Modern, Charles Macmanus, Martin Charny, Lynden Thorne from ACT opened *Annie* 2 (1982). Director, Terence Clarke. Designer, James Robertson. Costume, Lynden Thorne. Lighting, David Pendleton. Choreography, Stephanie Berndt. Musical Director, Colin Fischer. Cast: Hugh Warbucks, Ronald Macmanus; Miss Hannigan, Maggie Denyer; Anna, Belinda McManus; Madame Armfeldt, Rose Peters; John Peter, Colin Smart; Victorian Arnold et al (1982, cont'd).

Four years ago the Canberra Theatre Trust decided to cap the summer tourist market with a holiday musical cash lottery. This year's show, *Annie*, attracted primarily local lunch groups, but was no less a presentation than those from anywhere should have been delighted to encounter.

It was instructive to see many of the best amateur and some professional talent from Canberra respond with such verve and style to Terence Clarke's direction. These are performers whose everyday standards may according to the diverse director with whom they work. That none of them ever looked or sounded better than in this show is a tribute to Clarke.

The star of the evening was undoubtedly the warm, magnetic Oliver Warbucks of Ronald Macmanus, who never allowed the character to drift into caricature, rising achingly, the proportion of fun and authority. Maggie Denyer's mad-eyed Miss Hannigan turned all of the old madam's repertory outworn in a display of finely focused theatrical energy, while the Annie of Belinda McManus had a little-lead honesty that was neither precious nor cute.

Among the minor roles, Colin Smart revelled in his barbed diggings as Annie's paternal father, while singing up a storm in "Easy Street"; Vivienne Arnold's Lucy St Regis was an inherently uncorrected performance, while Rose Peters was pure class in figure, movement, and speech as Oliver's secretary, Golde Farwell. Such was the depth of casting that Pat Giblin made a convincing President Roosevelt and John Paisley, an ageing Butler.

Musically, apart from the outstanding professional banter of Macmanus and



Ronald Macmanus (Oliver Warbucks) and Belinda McManus (Annie) in ACT's *Annie*. Photo: Graeme Watson.

Sister, the chorus of down-and-out singing "We'd Like to Thank you, Herbert Hoover", was moving. The number that drew most applause was (predictably) the chorus of orphans singing "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile", for which choreographer Stephanie Berndt had them moving even better than they sang.

The set by James Robertson, based from the QTCC, had the three moving, two-dimensional pieces being shown in full view. Only the Warbucks apartment might have been more lavishly gilded. Greeted Modern's costumes (the QTCC-cycled period as well as social and economic levels) most effectively.

Colin Fischer used a strong washbesser mixed of songs, with agreeable loss of effect, in tandem with his fine hand of wind and percussions. If this was an amateur, however, I'd prefer it to spreading the orchestral budget over a whole band of less

professional standards. Musical tempos and rhythm were crisp and sparkling all night.

Finally, there's the show. It's not about an orphan seeking her parents, but about *Annie* making the best of Warbucks. It is, therefore, in the tradition of sustaining the romantic fallacy created by the American musical. As such, it carries not only an entertainment, but almost a dangerous innocence today when the rich are becoming wealthier and another depression seeps in upon the remainder.

Nevertheless, any show that summons the double property of having both kids and an animal (in this case a waddly excitable Newfoundland dog) share the stage with the actors deserves some measure of success. Entrepreneurially, the Canberra Theatre Trust chose wisely, not only in its musical, but in bringing Terence Clarke to town to show Canberra how well the local talent can perform.

Sydney Festival — three virtuoso performances

THE SYDNEY FESTIVAL: LA TRAVIATA, THE TELL-TALE HEART, THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, NO-GOOD BOYO, I'VE COME ABOUT THE SUICIDE, THE RIGHT MAN, INDIAN SUMMER, CONUNDRUM, THE DERANGED AGENT, WELCOME THE BRIGHT WORLD

by Michael Le Moignan

La Traviata by Giuseppe Verdi, Australian Opera on the Harbour, January 10, 1982

Conductor, Richard Bonynge

Cast: Jean Sutherland, Rosalyn Glass, Anne Austin, Gwyneth Evans, Peter van der Sande, John Gammie, John Wopat, John Shaw, Glyneth Jones, Richard Jones, Veronique Curtis, Gwendolyn Crook. With the Australian Opera Chorus and the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

The Tell-Tale Heart, *The Pudding* & *The Man of Silk* by Steven Reich, adapted from the stories by Edgar Allan Poe, London Theatre Company at the Sydney Opera House, January 15, 1982

Director, Steven Reich, Costume Design, Schon Jameson, Lighting, Douglas Howard, Heriotown Company Manager, Pauline de Burgh

Cast: Stephen Utley, Steven Reich, Edna Pownall, Tremaine Hartley, Michael Utley, Anne Summers, Michaela, John Peter Pidgeon

No-Good Boys at the Sydney Opera House, Opened January 5, 1982

Director, Susan Wilson, Designer, Grant Triff, Cast: Dylan Thorne, Ray Harwood, (Professionals)

The House of Usurpation by George Cram, for the Australian Playwright Festival at the Philip II Theatre, Sydney, Opened January 16, 1982

Director, Alan Fletcher, Designer, Helen Northern, Cast: Romeo Lyle, Pauline Plaistow, Ben Healeys, John Haynes

(Professionals)

The Bright World by Ross Renshaw, for the Ensemble Playwrights Festival at the Philip II Theatre, Sydney, Opened January 20, 1982

Director, Gary Hunter, Designer, Brian Perlman, Assistant Designer, Joanne Flemming, for the Ensemble



Sonya Taita and Ross Renshaw as *The Bright World* — the best of this year's offerings.

Five nights, *Dragon in the Philip II Theatre*, October, Opened January 5, 1982

Director, Douglas, Design, Anderson

Cast: Alan Fletcher, Steve Smith, Helen Sharr, Peter Rankin, Michaela, Terry Miller, Bruce Gaskins, Alison Brown, Deborah Ley, Liane Williams

Professional

The Burraugae (drama), by Company Production at the Federal Theatre, Opened January 21, 1982

Director, Michael Wilson

Cast: Joanne Simpson, Phoebe Samuels, Michael Wilson, Sophie-Anne Harrison, Tom Hartnett

Professional

Whistlers *The Bright World* by Stephen Reich, in Second Version, Opened January 27, 1982

Director, Neil Arnfield, Designer, Barbara D'Arcey

Sound Designer, Sarah de Jong, Lighting Designer, Jameson, Costumes, Editha Stoen, Manager, Steven Appleby

Cast: Stephen Utley, Karrina Isenart, Max Lewin, Pauline Plaistow, Alan Lister, Joanne Flemming, Steven

Craig Atting, Leonie Agius, Barry Ober, Tim

Archie Fletcher, Jennifer, Jo Fletcher, Marion Morris, Pauline Russell, Steven, Pauline Broadbent, Hartie

(Professionals)

The Sydney Festival falls halfway between a people's festival and an arts festival. In some ways there seems to be an unspoken wish to transform Sydney into Rio de Janeiro for the racials, and in other ways a desire to create Australia as the Edinburgh of the South. In trying to be both it succeeds in being neither.

There is no reason why Sydney should be anything but Sydney, the city's festival should exploit its uniqueness. Significantly, the most successful events seem to be the most original ones, such as the lover-horse race and the Hyde Park picnic. Truly is succeed, the festival must become more of a walking-point, a mass chattering and noise the population more. And the arts should be at the forefront of the popular involvement. The Festival should anchor and the diverse cultural interests of the city into a



Alan Fletcher and Duncan Carsegan in Ken Rens' *The Right Man* — *four creditline*

commercial celebration

Celebrating is an activity which, considered to be impossible without a glass in one's hand, but celebrating is what festivals are all about. We try to celebrate the best achievements of a wide variety of artistic fields, in the hope that enthusiasm and energy from one event will spill over into

others. This is the theory. In practice, the events assembled are unconnected and scattered all over the month and the city. It is difficult to find any sense of unity in the Festival.

Cultural overall is temporarily possible the audience has a way of glancing over work that is not exceptional and focusing only on

the best. For one, three stages will, I think, remain steady from Sydney 1982; of three major performances, Jean Sutherland in *La Traviata*, Steven Berkoff in *The Fall-*

Tale (Brett and Ray Henned as Dylan Thomas in *No-Good Boys*).

The Australian Opera's three, open-air performances in the Domain may well have been Jean Sutherland's finest hour. In the sheltered, contemporary but astonishingly vocal *Violins*, she was never more magnificently dainty and original. The same crowd of more than 10,000 ignored the drizzle and the census door-busking their way to Centennial Park, and loved every note. From a quartet of a mile away, La Stravanda glowed like a great, green traffic light. The applause was stuporous, frequent and deserved.

Festivals are an opportunity to widen the circle, to draw in new audiences as well as pleasing the regulars. With the exception of the Ensemble's *Playwrights' Festival* and the Meierov's *Circle of Suspense*, Sydney's theatre companies have failed to realize the Festival's potential. The Australian Opera is showing them the way, with a bold and brilliant move, which has brought the company's audience and work to the attention of a vast number of people who are not regular opera-goers.

Steven Berkoff achieved the unusual feat of upstaging himself, in two adaptations of stories by Edgar Allan Poe. The first, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, a chilling 25-minute monologue by a mad murderer trying to掩饰 his crime, was a fascinating character study which had the few-aught audience almost hypnotized. Berkoff exaggerated phrasé and expression, and held pauses (dramatised), but his concentrated energy demanded a right response.

The Fall Of The House Of Usher, which followed it, had too many similar resonances. Up to a point, the parallels were interesting and the production had a fair amount of light on Poe's bizarre beliefs and Jean Barker's play would have been sufficient, both together were a little rich, and in the second play the dramatic tension flagged.

Also at the Seymour Centre was *No-Good Boys*, a superbly chosen and balanced combination, on the last night of Dylan Thomas, by an exuberant Welsh actor from New Zealand, Ray Hemmick.

Hemmick's perceptive selection from the poems, letters, histories and biographies seemed passed a very funny, very moving picture of the poet's traps and blarney but ultimately tragic life. He was completely convincing in Thomas, shifting miraculously from the belligerent, witty raconteur to the self-pitying artist, to the hulking, thunderer. The most memorable lines of the show were the famous couplets written



Gasophony's The Depraved Agent. Should be offered a season by National Dramastars.

to his father on the subject of his attack to death.

Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

The Esquimalt's Playwrights' Festival at the Philip Street Theatre, which annually provides a one-week run for each of four new Australian plays, was a little disappointing after the successes of recent years, presenting no obvious choice for a full production at the more harbourside Esquimalt Theatre.

The best of the year's offerings was *The Case About The Sack*, by George Cram, directed by Alan Berlin, an eccentric comedy about a millionaire who chose to have his body frozen for 100 years, out of anxiety about mankind's future.

There is the bane of a good play here Workshopped at the 1981 National Playwrights' Conference in Canberra, the structure still does not effectively carry the writer's ideas, but I think it is worth further work. There are some excellent moments of drama, but the characters are too obviously drawn and the final twist is not at all satisfactory. But the play was never dull, for the most part amusing and intriguing, and I particularly liked John Boston as the Man and Ray Hackett as the Millionaire.

Ken Hays' political comedy, *The Right Man*, directed by Gary Baurer, started brilliantly, treating the audience in a party pre-selection committee, then made some interesting points about the severity of integrity in politics, but overacted its case and characters, finally losing all credibility.

Julian Sinner, written by Justin Flipping and directed by Doug Anderson, did not match their success from last year's Esquimalt Playwrights' Festival. However, The story of the 10-day reign in Pope John Paul I was an innovative idea which

became increasingly bogged in dogma.

Gasophony by John Smythe, directed by June Otto, was an extremely silly play which got all its feet tangled up in puns and word play and promptly fell on its face. Somewhere subtexted in the script was a warm and touching little romantic comedy, but whenever it tried to surface it was immediately torpedoed by the writer.

Perhaps the best of the Esquimalt fringe choices was *The Depraved Agent*, a sharp-witted satirical revue by a New Zealand company called Gasophony who have recently taken up residence in Sydney. The humour is in the style of *New The New* (PCDish News) and the principal weapon is parody, used with deadly effect in a number of quick-fire caricatures and sketches.



*Max Gibbs and Barry Otto in National's *Welcome The Bright World*. Both depicted in the pursuit of rock. Photo: Dennis del Forno*

notable by Sally-Anne Bertram and Michael Wilson. The musical accompaniment is lively and attractive, and the company has a fine cast sing in Public Places. I suggest the National offer Gasophony a season Downunder before some TV channel picks them up and spoils them.

The most eagerly awaited event on Sydney's theatrical calendar was naturally a part of the Fringe, although it opened in the final week. *Wilson The Bright World*, a new play by Stephen Sondheim, directed by Ned Armfield, was an aggressive allegory of personal betrayal, a gloomy vision of man's inhumanity to man and a rather naively argued conclusion that the rage of the Red Brigade is a righteous rage.

Sondheim's last work, *Crusoe*, was a masterpiece of lucidity, which conveyed the most complex political and emotional ideas in the simplest possible words. We see only glimpses of this talent in the new play, where the writing is prosaic and over indulgent and needs vigorous editing and clarification.

Max Gibbs and Barry Otto play two German scientists working on a new elementary particle theory. The life interests with thought: the radical daughter of one of the scientists, Katina Poste, in a tremendously dynamic performance seduces her father's colleague. Hejnow has at the barricades and the father goes to inform the secret police. They have both allowed personal and political commitment to distract them from the pure pursuit of truth, and both are doomed.

Simon d'Acy's set and Ned Armfield's direction combine to give the play a grand, spectacular presentation that has all the necessary power but fails to exploit the more interesting elements of the play. The result is too cold and cerebral, we need to be much closer to the characters, more personally involved.

Reflections on the sunshine state

THE QUEENSLAND GAME

FLOWERS

by Jeremy Ridgman

The Queensland Game directed by Jeremy Ridgman. La Boite Theatre Old, Opened December 1981. Duration: Seven 90s. Opened December 1981.

Cast: Chris Burns, Ross Lynch, Maggie Novak, Tony Pheifer, David Pyke, Pauline May, David Pyke, Chris Williams.

For info:

Flowers by the London Royal Company for Mayors' Birthdays Old, Opened January 1982. Full season to be reviewed in detail soon (see *Professional*).

If Malcolm Blaylock, La Boite's artistic director, is committed to steering the company in the direction of community theatre, then *The Queensland Game* might well be a taste of future delights. Six actors and director Sean Mori, most of whom spent their youth in rural Queensland, have collaborated to present a pot-pourri of

songs, anecdotes, character sketches and stories celebrating the folk mythology of country town life. Thus they do wash itself and wash, cleverly merging a courtship between the Scylla and Charibdis of hearts involving and cynical condescension. Most of the almost separate stories, such as Bertie-Peterson's vision of Queensland in the Australian Bushman and his wife's secret formula for the perfect pumpkin soup, are amusingly depicted in an ageing sound carriage having closed the air of the obvious, as it were, Mori and his cast proceed to reveal their own rich and comic tangency of rural life.

If there are a few elsewhere patches around the end of the first half, they are relieved by a pleasing sense of shape in what could easily have become a mere hash-potch of "tum". The performance begins with a mixture of quite unprepossessing intimacy as each actor "meets" a personal reminiscence on the audience and cast, a brief warm-up for everybody the basic link as in the dying moments of a local hop, complete with Mexican Hat Dance and Lucky Spot content, so that all, of course, participate.

The town hall dance is then born out of the underlying structure of the show and produces some beautifully observed moments, an unusually dull rock group specialising in half-baked riffs and drum rolls to punctuate the MC's quips and announcements, some solidly racy talent spot and an exquisite wordless sequence in which three local ladies hectic in and tout and display themselves with proudly all-blinded self-confidence before the female members of the audience.

The other principle setting is the local

pub, with its unctuously familiar faces, anecdotes and mannerisms. Here the pace understandably lags as the daily round drags on an almost listless plane, but here are found some of the clearest characterisations of the evening, the local grader driver obsessed with the mixture of his harac battle with a particularly unmanageable lump of dirt, and a fresh young teacher who gets the come-on from a young lady and confidently chases her up, only to learn later that he will be meeting her next day, in her grade eight class.

One of the most memorable sets from the show is Tasy Phelan's brief portrayal of a country town housewife, a double-edged study in rural optimism. Back from the week's shopping, she battles with two rambunctious, obviously gigantic dogs, runs over the various blunders made by the relatives in the new batch of family snaps and, in a frantic telephone conversation with a suspicious neighbour, pretences to provide once again her specialities for the annual fair, earlier bakes made from ice-cream cartons decorated with crocheted motifs. There is not an ounce of depreciation in Phelan's approach in her character, the laughter is that of recognition but the genuine dimensions and partly pitiable, the circuits of daily life. Perhaps that is what celebratory community theatre, like *The Queensland Game*, is partly about.

The arrival in Brisbane of Lesley Kemp and her more-dance company (to be reviewed here in more detail) was heralded by a fortnight of controversy and speculation following the Presser's announcement that she would take steps to see Queensland free of "several degradation" by saying to a that there was no "lower class" (his words) on the stage of Her Majesty's One ministres that one of his official royal advisors had, as frequently happens apparently, seen the admittedly provocative publicity brochure and made a quick telephone call and that in the light of Mary Whitehouse's recent crusade against simulated buggery in the English National Theatre, it was mainly the thought of "peccad" that worried her.

The local press had a field day, with letters, leaders and lead-ups, as the spirit of Norman Stansfield stalked the Federal stage, would Queensland, in the face of world-wide approbation for Kemp's artistic credentials, mostly conclusively to the assessment that has become part of the state's image². Passions abounded, in which burly policemen waded into a tragic swiftness in sepias and lights and attempted to restrain and then arrest theatrical naked dancers. Also, for some, it was not to be a handful of police officers sat impassively through *Flowers* and next day it was announced that no Queensland law had been broken. (No-one seems to have asked what needed to have happened for an arrest to be made.)



Chris Burns and David Pyke in La Boite's *The Queensland Game* — almost Bette Midler glasses at the pub.

And who of the show stuff? The *Private Lives* muddled to more than the bawdry of the performers. Having seen *Flowers* six years ago in London, I was grateful and more than surprised that Kamp, with a company only two of whom are from the original cast, could still generate the same fun. There have, in fact been silent revolutions, lighting is more sophisticated and the central bar room scene, in which three whores pathetically attempt to lure the green-like Lady off the *Flowers* away from the *coup de foie* of Divine's lover has taken on a richly comic grandeur. There is no patching up Kamp's showmanship, nor the magnetic effect of his own uncanny presence as Divine, from the first glimpse of her gliding entrance to the last spasm of her voluptuous death-throes.

Rocks, grips, explodes

NED KELLY

by Fiona Perry

Ned Kelly - the Electric Music Show by Big Lorraine, Peter, , French Flute, New Moon Theatre Co, General and North Qld Council Grants (Box Office January 27, 1982)

Deanne, Terry O'Connell, Michael Devine, John Ross Douglas, David Bell, Chococopter Alia Kadogo, Lighting Designer, Michael Elkin, Sound Design, Roni Baines.

Last Stephen Clark, Bob Baines, Wayne Purman, John Bush, David Sandford, Ken Ralph, Michael Stewart, Joe Spain, Peter Bertho.

Program note

A new theatre company is always an exciting prospect, especially in an industry that has not seen such severe and disheartening cutbacks. The New Moon Theatre Company of central and northern Queensland may be the last of an endangered species.

In the deep north the air is keyed with expectancy, risk, optimism and the unpredictable hopes of a community who have had no expert professional theatre for too long. Whether it be "wild-eyed angry young prophet converting the desirous" syndrome, a single touch of the sun, the dreaded disease "gone trappist" or a sensible sense of responsibility, that company has a rare urgency and a quiet firmness, as they project permanent professional theatre in far northern Australia.

Where southern audiences have recently seen a fall in the number of young people attending, this company's opening production of *Ned Kelly* (ie Electric Music Show) has rural youth returning. Five years after the original, in a production that is overwhelmingly theatrical (not theatrical), that doesn't crudely mix design, (the element used to tell the Liverpoo-



Stephen Clark as Ned Kelly in New Moon's production. Photo: Von Jossner.

production) *Ned Kelly* is not an diluted choice, it rocks, it grips, it explodes.

Images, stark and uttering, here in from the sun with an clinical likes and ergonomic rocking horse, from the actors expressing states of mind with their bodies, from projected slides and the instant impact of the re-arranged score.

Ned Kelly under Terry O'Connell's direction becomes a sophisticated expansion of mechanical symbols, and emotionally charged rhythms that circumambulate vocally, instrumentally and bodily. Alia Kadogo's (her *Leviathan* (1979) choreography relates naturally to the Steve Hart, the sturdy, round de jure's precociously witty thoughts, Joe Byrne moves far more aggressively, Commissioner Hare would step like Penguin (one of *Batman*) and the policeman picks it to an absurd gun-slap. Slow motion running, broken and his hypnotic effect. At times, the raw edge of the music demands more abandonment. The passion, violence, grief and hurt, they are always controlled. Only Ned breaks this tight shell.

The sound enhances but the acting never is. The actors also form the band although the audience is never aware of the switching, that must go on backstage.

Technically sophisticated, the show is still very raw of itself, very studied. There is a mega-awfully small looking on the presentation, even the rocking horse is a little Steve Strange, the anti-atharistic in theme, just a little sick. It's used from being just an extended film clip sequence with some moody stylisation, fantasy fulfillment and reverberate performances by the overwhele that is Stephen Clark's Ned

Kelly. The padded shoulders and overblown could have dashed him into a shallow grave. They don't, because force, gentle, half-romantic, always unusually real, he makes you care from the first who becomes of him.

Almost always on stage, he responds with his body, his voice, stabilising the dramatic environment, connecting and energising all the emotions and he holds the imagination together. This is as it should be, a carefully balanced score and a powerful performance.

Joe Spain as Aaron Sherratt is the only actor to exploit the potential of his half-mad. Beneath it, his eyes show the wet glass.

From the first tableau where Ned Kelly takes off his mask, to be the only voice without, the production conveys unmentionable things about the legend, about Australia, and the Ned Kellys who are still defiant, still on the run. The figure is painted down three histories of persecution, the dark suffering of the Irish, the Kelly story itself and splitting onto the screen, shades of troubled Northern Ireland, in the worn face of a singer, the tension in a group of English soldiers.

From the first image of a black umbrella rising like a bird of prey to the final powerfully negative imprint of the noise, high over the zusammen scene, *Ned Kelly* punctuates home. Left is a rocking horse that never stops, a mask that never comes off and it does, the hand every made the noise in the empty lives of those who rock, the final knowledge, "they'll burn the Kelly's till the last one dies."

Exciting, confusing, compelling

BARNUM

by Gus Werly

BARNUM by Cy Coleman, Michael Stewart, Albie Hecht, Michael Bigley International ART and Art D. Adelphi Theatre Opened January 11, 1982

DIRECTOR Christopher Biggins, Lee, Michael Davies, Noel Smith, Matt Murphy, Meyer Jolley, Gary Baskin, Greg Lawrence, Charlie Gaye, Maxine MacFarlane, Brighton Day, Mary, with Michael O'Connor, Michaela Gervais, Maria Richardson, Lester Sorenson, Elizabeth-Anne Robinson, Peter Gray, John Studdard, Dennis Whalen, Wayne Scott, Kermode, Chita, Gregory Peck, Walter, Deborah, Winnie, Karen von Nida, Karen, Trevor, Troy, Shara, Astoria, Trish, Shirley, Alfreida, Marilynn, Victoria, Stephen, Brown, Parsons, St. Olaf, Marlene, Lord, Professor.

P T Barnum was fascinated in many things. In particular he was fascinated in his partnerships. He knew when and how to get in with the strength and they top of the bill. He's done it again on Broadway and now on the road. The newly formed partnership of Bigley, Barnum and Lawrence is sure to succeed, for the master of attractions has become his own counterpart more amazing than Washington's money, bigger than Jumbo, bigger even than Tom Thumb. Barnum is back from the dead, sporting three Tony Awards! How's that for handup?

Lawrence carries Barnum on stage like a long last train, and together they spin, slide, waltz and strafe through a lifetime in two hours of fancy — Barnum the dream, Lawrence the stuff that dreams are made of. That stuff includes newly learned circus skills — tightrope, juggling and aerial — to add to his strong, dancing and singing accomplishments. Barnum has made three acquaintances. He has, before Folk Hero and Symbol of the old self-made Doctor, but unlike other American folk heroes he has acquired a nice live in every which does for beauty at a punch. Together they have the qualities of dancing and vulnerability which showbusiness loves in itself and the public loves in the business.

All that takes place in a kaleidoscope of gestures and costumes. The tangled triangles of love and work, the circular stories of success and failure are there in the big-top design, in lyrics, in choreography, and arrangements. The unique flesh of inspiration the black and white of respectable

morality, the grey and brown of good sense inform the interlocking attractions of the three-ring circus — exciting, confusing, compelling.

Director Biggins Lee has planned his production so that, once the show gets underway, the pace never flags and the predictable never disappears. His cast of multi-talented performers work around Livermore-Barnum like a tight wheel he rides and cuts with style, vocal dexterity and physical daring. The whole spectacle is one of high energy, competence, strength and professionalism.

In fact Barnum is a cleverly constructed musical. Its disparate elements are indisparately part of a greater whole and its concept positive. The star-audience intimacy of the one-man show to engage with the random enthusiasts of canvas, the selective attraction of biographical detail and the preservation of songs and routines under the on-stage guidance of musical director, Noel Smith. Furthermore, the shape of the show and use of personnel breaks the conventional ties, supporting actors, chorus, harpist. Of course it is there, and we know who we're come to see, but there is room for give and take which transforms formula and complements casting.

And one must be complimentary about the casting. Gaye MacFarlane, as Charity Barnum, worked especially with Livermore. Here was undoubtedly the least vigorous performance, yet her singing, her strength and judgment were first rate. Above all, the warmth of her operatically trained voice connected Livermore's brittle and brawling qualities through ballad and clown numbers like "The Colors of My Life" and "I Like

Your Style". This contrast of popular and operatic was equally well exploited in the mid-show interlude between Barnum and Jenny Lind. Deborah Winterbottom tickled "the Swedish Nightingale" with clarity and confidence.

On the gravel and gait side the show sported Moss Richardson. This cabaret and concert performer from Los Angeles impressed at the opening and captivated Jeanne Moreau in the first part of the evening and later returned in another guise as the Blue Singer to grab the show, by the scuff of the neck to cover and shake out "Black and White". Add an impressive and athletic Diane May as "Responsive" and their enthusiasm and attack from Wayne Scott Kerman as Tom Thumb and you have a core of principals which thrives and tight and true singing, dancing, acrobatics and clowning.

As you might expect in a show for all the family, Barnum doesn't rock the boat (except to the foot-tapping beat of half a dozen overline Coleman Stewart numbers) though it makes some gestures. The values are still apple-pie OK. It says that there is hope in the world for a dinner and a fight as long as he has a down-to-earth wife to sit out the emotional jangles and take the crucial initiatives. It shows that Polynesia is a lower class of Showbusiness and applauds the success of the world. It claims that freaks are special people. It says that "you gotta have your show to the mood of the country" — the people. I thought about that one as I stepped out to the tone of a marching band, towards a sign marked "To the Egrets", wondering as I went what attractions would be in store for me there. It was a wild night outside.



Reg Livermore and cast in *Barnum* — the stuff that dreams are made of.

VIC.

New plays, old ways

NARROW FEINT ILLUMINATED DUCKS STEFAN

by Suzanne Spontini

Narrow Feint by David Rabe, Melbourne Theatre Company, Abbotsford, opened Jan 13, 1981.
Director, William Gaskin (Design, Mark Wright,
Lighting, Design, Neil Pendleton; Stage Manager,
Barbara Bremner).

Carey, Maggot, Alexander, Rose, Michael, Yvonne
Written, Rob Holdstock, Harold Quigley, Andrew
Marie (Performed).

Illuminated Ducks by Harold Quigley, Animal, South
Melbourne, Vic, Opened Jan 21, 1981.
Director, Michael Berendt.

Carey, Lorraine, Harold Barry
Written by Paul Cattermole, La Mala Thorne,
Melbourne, Vic, Opened January 27, 1981.

Director, Paul Cattermole, Stage Manager, Trevor
McCann.

Carey, John, Paul Cattermole, Mystery, Margaret Knight
(Performed).

Three new plays by new writers ought to be an event to be welcomed, however *Narrow Feint*, *Illuminated Ducks* and *Stefan* in different ways are disappointing. All three have been presented by new directors in contexts potentially conducive to experiment and innovation, however they lack theatrical invention and the sense of discovery that can accompany new work.

Of the three, David Rabe shows the most promise as a writer for theatre, he is an acute observer of character type and situation and has an ear for the cutting phrase and the telling epigram, but his character development and scene structure are tentative and scattered.

Narrow Feint charts the progress of a bright but erratic student, Harold Quigley, through a traditional school where he clashes with a cynical, literate teacher and a progressive school where he is taken under the wing of a female teacher. In the background are Harold's enterprising parents and sundry psychiatrists all trying to understand what makes young Harold tick. In the second half of the play Harold has left school, and is working for the local council as a entrepreneur, his father has died, the cynical teacher has become a successful television personality and Harold's name has been retrospectively linked in a scandal with the progressive teacher. Or at least this



Andrew Marie (Harold Quigley) in MTC's *Narrow Feint* — *Stefan* and fragments. Photo: Geoff Burry.

in the stated scenario of the play, but unfortunately a major character is missing — the audience's ability to believe that Harold son over frank and particularly unusual. In fact Harold and Harold's problem which led him to attempt suicide in the first act is the least engrossing aspect of the play, let alone the supposed contrast between the two brothers.

The only interesting and satisfying thing in the play is the development of the cynical matron, Woodcroft, and one wishes wished that the entire play had been built around her. As it was, one was left with a series of subplots — at various institutions — schools, the media, advertising, and the helping professions, a collection of clever one-liners and a lot of gratuitous theatrical banter. Rob McLean's performance as Woodcroft had a manic energy and brittle edge that carried the play across the longeurs of the songs without Ian William Clark's direction was right but ultimately unable to weld the flashes and digressions into a credible or satisfying whole.

If *Norrie Fifer* strained too hard after cleverness, then the least that could be said about *Illuminated Ducks* and *Styles* was that the writing was modest and unaffected.

Hazel Barry's one-woman show, *Illuminated Ducks*, had a simplicity and directness in its address to the audience, as Connie a young wife and mother reveals her experiences in the Depression. Director Glyn Bryant put Connie, played by Hazel Barry, in a rapturously enclosed space in the backyard of Arthol and let her talk. Barry's performance was as subtle and unpretentious as her writing but as a theatrical event the piece left much to be desired. It may as well have been a radio play or performed indoors on a bare stage because at no point was the integrity of the space ever sustained or the relationship of the character to it ever explored, instead there was a sense of watching a recording outdoors for an apparent reason other than it provided an "interesting" background.

Paul Carter's play, *Styles*, at La Mama was unaffiliated to the point of utter banality, had it been sharper the play might have suffered for a pre-emptive advertisement for Christian television 15 years ago on the plight of untrained mothers. Seeing it at exhaustive length in 1982, it was the staff of an acutely embarrassing and boring evening at the theatre, made even more painful by its obvious sincerity and correctness. To say that the portrayal of the young woman was misogynist requires more慷慨d intention to the writing than it merits.

There seemed to be a dim acknowledgement that the attitudes were past in the fact that the play was ostensibly set in 1930, however in the details of domestic language and costume were miraculously nondescript, the actual time the events took



Hazel Barry as Connie in her play *Illuminated Ducks* at La Mama.

VIC.

continued

place seemed quite permanent. Unchecked by wits, insight or even minimal theatricality, Snyders was one of those plays that could go on for ever but fortunately only lasts for a couple of hours.

You have to laugh

BUS SON OF TRAM

by Garry Macmillan

Bus, Bus Of Tram, Banan Lounge, Comedy Cafe, Melbourne, Vic. Mr Quackock, Mary Kennedy, Steve Blackmore, Geoff Tait.

Well, you have to laugh, don't you? I did. I really did, laughed into the night, over the vegetable croutons, the aspy sat and far into the selection of desserts.

I laughed at what Rod Quackock said inside the Banana Lounge, which as you know is above the X-rated Comedy Cafe, and then I laughed at what he said on the bus.

He'd threatened us with the bus you see, but we didn't really know whether it was a joke, or a rite that doesn't really happen, or a joke, as in you actually get on the bus and drive around. It turned out to be a joke of the latter kind, that is we got on the very clean and comfortable bus and drove around. And laughed.

Prior to this in part of the first kind of joke, that is when we didn't know whether we were going on the bus or not, Mr Quackock had looked extremely worried as to where we would go on the bus if indeed we did go.

The Myers window had come down you see, it being still after Christmas. Well not the actual window but the known decorations inside the window, a sort of queen chrome for Melbourneans for mould perceptions. That was where you used to go in the bus if indeed the then-as-yet-to-be bus manifested itself in actual forward momentum.

So Mr Quackock, in the absence of the Myers window, warned us a temporary location to other themes, which tended to the idea that we wouldn't be going anywhere.

In other words he got us

We're in the quiet at the top of the year with our red tickets, the people with the

blue tickets are still smiling and drinking and eating, and we're still not sure.

Outside in the red light district of Fitzroy, in another quiet, walking around the corner, we're still not sure. Even on the road and clear bus driven by sober Jim (in fact I think it was Jim) we're still not sure.

It drives all. Now we're sure. But where are we going? Surely not to the naked Myers windows?

Mr Quackock holds up a clock on a stick. Follow this clock whatever you do wherever we go. This clock could mean the difference between Mr and death. Keep the clock in sight.

We know so, we really do because the bus has driven off down nearly Brunswick Street and turned left into the legendary Spanish End of Johnson Street, where Mr Quackock calls out "Myron's Spanish, hold up your hand!" And some do.

This goes on and on. Left up Nicholson past the home of a friend of a former acquaintance of a mate of the daughter(s)-in-law of someone who once saw Sepia Taylor and knew where he once had his weary dead head. And then it's Spring So



Rod Quackock

and the rude joke about the Windsor Hotel, and Parliament House and then it's left up Mo's Alley and the damned bus stops.

We have to get on.

Follow the clock! Keep the clock in sight! Through the darkness of the Fitzroy Gardens, a great sweep of middle-aged, middle-class, middle-muddled attaches and

of grotesque comedy troupe.

We're off to Captain Cook's Cottage, not that it was but someone had to live in something smaller. And the Fairy Tree And the Model Tudor Village. All the sights. There's even a police proved car working through the bushes, looking for god only knows what or who, but certainly not us, we hope. And we hope that Mr Quackock and his pal Mr Tait don't do anything to the policemen causing them some or an interest.

By gods as I'm thought, on a big hysterical crowd on the dark forest. But what's that looing, or sitting on the horizon? It's the fabulously, wealthy Hilton Hotel, and we're going there, we're going into the foyer and Mr Quackock is up at the desk asking for a single room for \$5. We hope he doesn't go through with it. They haven't got any.

He doesn't and we escape back to the bus and sober George (was it George?) and back to the Banana Lounge via a visitation of the Comedy Cafe's seemingly prosperous rival The Last Laugh and the Yugoslav character of Fitzroy.

I'd laughed and laughed. Funny in a ride in a bus with a bunch of drunks and a comedie. Sort of gets you out of yourself, you see.

But that wasn't all. When we'd sit and drink our mean temperature beer there was more to laugh at.

Debbie turned up. Debbie's a real joke, you know, especially when she's with Tom. They're both so publicly as you know, and culturally on the ball. Would you make fun of Robyn Archer? Gee, I wouldn't. That's like laughing at Australia. On the face of it, silly.

Anyways doubtless you know someone like Debbie who's socially, like, politically, like, culturally, like, interpersonally, weirdly etc on the ball. Getting two things. Again, you know, like wrapping her head around what's measurably present in this space-time continuum, right? Not real happiness, right? Not a real nice situation with where she's positively at, right? More than a pos, less than solid, right?

We laughed, right? We had to. Mr Quackock, who is really Mr. Kynsella, who is the real life incarnation of Debbie, right?, was sitting on one other tiny, his hand on a nearby book. You've gotta laugh, there's you?

Laughs?

Respect, that's what we should have had. For a genuinely original, one-off, unique, instant, never been seen or heard of before except for Tram, naturally. Dad of all us, non derivative son of right out you can only have love, in person with the most persons or person there undertaking it.

I mean it wouldn't be the same if it wasn't on book or Festive snapshot. You had to be there, and one day it'll be possible to describe it.

Laughs? I could have killed myself!

Spectaculars big and small

THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

THE WIZARD OF OZ

by Margaret Luke

The Servant Of Two Masters by Carlo Goldoni
Music: Miller & His Majesty's Theatre, Perth WA
Opened January 3, 1982

Director: Doug Miller, Raymond Omeido, Music: Lynn and Michael Morris, Stage: Douglas Polkinghorne, Lighting:

Design: Helen Weston

Cast: Michaela, Helen Hinchliffe, with Roger Morris, Terry Johnson, Lynn King, James Brown, Eddie Poppe, Frank Johnson, Caroline McKeown, Gerald Blackstock, Douglas Polkinghorne.
(Prologue)

The Wizard of Oz adapted by Peter Bunn.
University Dramatic Society, Dolphin Theatre UWA,
Opened January 13

Director and Choreography: Peter Martin, Designer:

Henry Matras, Musical Director and Piano/Roll

Dramaturgy, Performances and Sound: Helen, John

Gremmels, Lighting Design: John Dingle

Cast: Kelly Newton, Pat Russell, Penny Bladen,

Martin Farquhar, Duncan Soutar, Tony Pierce,

Naomi Weston, Sally Coates, Wendy Green, Dicky

Hill, Robert Blissett, Children and Children
(London)

In the prologue to Gordini's *Forest*, the theatre director instructs the poet in the art of producing acceptable entertainment, and his top priority is "above all — make sure there's enough *laughing*!" The holiday show would have run with his complete approval.

The big professional offering at His Majesty's was designed to appeal to all ages and taste. Cleverly adapted to contemporary manners by Jake Newby and Raymond Omeido, Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters* was a colourful romp, part farce, part pantomime, breathless comedy, with music — according to the programme — more popular to very popular. The means in greatest terms that the action was helped along by send-ups of both opera and pop music, always with a sure sense of the appropriate style.

The complications of the plot — involving a servant having himself sent to two masters who, as it happens, are lovers, inseparable, and actually searching for each other — provide enormous scope for every style of comedy, with mistakes inevitable, mistaken motives and of course, mistaken sex.

Settings were brightly lollipop in appeal,

and the costumes sumptuous; the appropriate pairs of lovers were colour-matched outfit, and there were most satisfying visual effects of slowly gliding gondolas and atmospheric star-studded sky.

The indomitable Helen Hinchliffe played the Servant in a dramatic style that has become her personal trademark. Caroline McKeown was both decorative and obscene as his two "masters", and Eddie Poppe was the plum part of Sempronius, a master-slave in love with the Servant. Not only was she one of the few members of the cast who managed to keep up the absurd Italian accent throughout, but she created a lively, gay character. Terry Johnson, continuing her holdover from gondola opera, was a joy to hear, and the duets between her and Caroline McKeown were particularly effective.

Individual characters were neatly differentiated: Edgar Melodic's Pertinacity, crusty, small and domineering, Ivan King (pedantic and legalistic), James Brown and Gerald Blackstock both very much aristocratic gentlemen but with the gestures of maniacs of the '30s.

Douglas Polkinghorne, who devised the music, also provided the excellent piano accompaniment and furthermore played "trumpet, potter, water, gondoliers, crewmen etc".

Add to this that the whole thing was presented as a play within a framework of a tiny Italian travelling theatre company, with direct comments to the audience, and the State motto "relax in a state of excitement" was well demonstrated.

At the University's Dolphin Theatre the University Dramatic Society embarked on the ambitious project of a mini-spectacular *The Wizard of Oz*, although clearly done "on the cheap", was a remarkable effort, making up in imagination approach and design what it lacked in funding.

Aimed primarily at child-audiences, it kept the adults' attention. It was interesting

to observe the modern, telly-oriented kids' reactions to the "Over the Rainbow" song proved not long and too slow, as did the longer dialogue and the "clever" lyrics of the Cowardly Lion's song. The song-and-dance routines ("We're off to see the Wizard") were a hit, as were the chorus numbers, Munchkin children tripping across the stage in green bunchy costumes, and the measures and finishes of the wiz's were of major interest. Thunder effects actually scared the younger members of the audience (but only briefly), and the few opportunities for audience participation showed total involvement — evidenced by spontaneous scenes of waving to the heroes when danger threatened.

Among some youngsters later which had been the favorite character and the best bit — the Wicked Witch was much down, especially her rendition of "Let's Get Physical" near the concluding curtain.

The student players attacked their roles with gentle yet sophisticated humour, particularly Penny Bladen's acquiescent and innocently coquettish Good Witch was very funny, as was Pat Russell's gleefully evil Wicked Witch, while Kelly Newton as Dorothy had a plausibly natural voice and an appealing air of friendly bewilderment. She was assisted by a charming, well-trained pomeranian, who seemed to take no offence at being set about in a small basket and wearing an enormous pink bow. Her three companions were less happy about the singing — the mice seemed unashamedly patchy — but they made up for it by getting into the characters of the Lion, Scarecrow and The Man in the Yellow Hat.

It was clear that direction, choreography and design were of greater than usual importance here — working with an ad hoc company of experienced and semi-experienced players, and presenting a "spectacular" on a very small stage. It was an impressive achievement.



Helen Hinchliffe's *Servant Of Two Masters*.



Spectacular triumph

EQUUS

By CLIFF GILLIAM

Equus by Peter Shaffer. The Theater in association with the Picnic Stage Company. Directed by Peter Shaffer. Set design, David Aldenbroek. Costumes, Brian Jones. Also, Simon Woodward, Michaela.

The Pti Theater group has, since its inception as an amateur workshop group and self-help theatre company in 1975, demonstrated an energy and persistence, and a determination to rise high, which has distinguished it among Perth's "little" theatres. Past productions have included plays by Shakespeare, Peter and Sloppy, unusual and ambitious choices for a group working with minimal resources in a suburban context, and it has to be said that the gap between aspiration and product has on occasion been yawning. But with their current production of Peter Shaffer's *Equus*, a play far assuming "modern classic" status, the Pti Theater has come of age. I have rarely before seen any amateur group give so polished a performance of a challenging work.

Much of the credit must be given, of course, to David Aldenbroek who paraded as director for the production. Aldenbroek's past experience with professional companies, and as a developer of talent within formal drama courses at WAIT, undoubtedly contributed much to the degree of skillful and intelligent playing he was able to elicit from a cast including many genuine novices, but crisp and sensitive direction alone cannot make a silk purse from a cow's ear. One must have talent on which to build, and here Aldenbroek was particularly fortunate in having two very talented actors in the central roles of Martin Dysart, the unscrupulous psychiatrist/therapist, and Alan Strang, the disturbed adolescent whose blinding of six horses is the trigger for the play's action.

As Dysart, Pti founder and Artistic Director Brian Jones gave a studied and thoughtful performance. His sedulous skills brought an authority to the role which it had lacked in previous productions I have seen, and which was able to accommodate a tendency to overstatement of emotionality in his interpretation of the character. As Alan Strang, Simon Woodward gave a performance which stamps him, young as he is, as an actor of great talent and promise. In

his gut-wrenchingly authentic playing, without ever becoming indulgent or undisciplined.

These two were supported by a cast in which the level of performance was uniformly high. Aldenbroek cast the play extremely well and supporting players like Les Mandeloffs and Peter Saunderson (as Alan's parents) and Maureen van der Heyden (as the middle girl, Jill Martin) measured, in the measure of the play's focus upon them, the production's overall power and finesse.

Mention should also be made of Brian Jones' direction of movement and choreography — the basic 'team who are so central to this play's stage imagery were, in their stylized grace, a feature of the production clearly superior to the (professional) Playhouse production of 1975. Indeed, this Pti production was in every respect at least the equal of that production and can therefore be counted, given the limitations under which the company works, a spectacular triumph for all concerned.



Jan Preston (Nurse), Simon Woodward (Alan) and Michaela van der Heyden (Jill) in Pti Theater's *Equus*.

Theatre Guide



ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

MAZIPIE (51 8151)

Theatre 62: *The Cucumber King* by John Lomax, director Malcolm Moore musical composer: Glen Hennrich designer: Ken Wilby. A topsy-turvy household with the arrival of King Kumi and his subjects demanding political asylum. March 8-19

PLAYBOX (51 8121)

Troupe Theatre: *The Curse Of The Starving Chas* and *Busted Child* by Sam Shepard, director: Roger Pulvers. In repertory. March 8-20

STAGE COMPANY (223 6283)

Arts Theatre: *Percy and Rose* by Rob George, director: John Noble designer: Bruce McKendall, with Dennis O'Keefe and Sophie O'Byrne. March 10-20

STATE THEATRE COMPANY (51 8151)

Playhouse: *Signal Deliver* by Patrick White, director: Neil Armfield. A chamber play for four actors in which a husband and wife are viewed through youth, middle and old-age in the unlikely setting of a bus-tram shelter surrounded by the post-war advance of the ever-emerging city. March 5, 8, 15-20

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY (51 8121)

Opera Theatre: *A Map Of The World*

by David Hare, director: David Hare, with Robert Grubbs and Roslyn Roth. Set against the background of a UNESCO conference in India. The play centres on a confrontation between an Indian intellectual and a young British journalist. March 8-17

FESTIVAL FRINGE

THE ACTING COMPANY (274 0281 ext 3701)

What The World Needs by Sue Rider, director: Sue Rider. A fast moving, entertaining and non-partisan look at the game of politics. Riverland tour, starts March 15. Touring metropolitan schools, March 8-12. *Space Movers* by Sue Rider and Nick Giff, director: Sue Rider. Riverland tour, starts March 15

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY

FOOTLIGHTS CLUBS The Little Theatre: *Cheap Mucky Trash* March 8-13

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE

AMP THEATRE: Treatment. This play explores the lives and problems of three institutionalised handicapped children. March 10-12

CHILDRENS AREA THEATRE

Up Stage Books 'n' All - A Peely Fantasy. A look at sport in our society. March 15-19

CIRCUS 02

Phoenix Park Trotting Ground, Port Pirie presented by the Arts Council Of SA. A family show with all the traditional acts of the circus, together with a rock band and some of

Australia's leading cabaret performers. March 26-27

ELIZABETH PATERSON

State Art Gallery: *The 3 Is See, The Merry-Go-Round Person and The Old Woman At The Window*. March 8-12

HOLE IN THE WALL THEATRE

Pine Theatre: *My Name Is Pablo Picasso* by Mary Gage, with Edgar Maccall as Picasso. March 9-13

HOME COOKING THEATRE COMPANY

The Stables: Caversham Arts Centre. *I am Who You Like*, devised by Meredith Rogers and Barbara Czerniak. March 2-7, 10-13, 18-20

LA MAMA THEATRE

Under Milkwood by Dylan Thomas. March 8-20

G THEATRE

Gerald and Clive Live. March 5 & 12, 23, 29-30

Pride and Prejudice. March 18, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27

The Typhoid. March 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19

SALAMANCA THEATRE COMPANY

AMP THEATRE: Annie's Coming Out devised by Richard Dwyer. March 18

The Forests Of The Night by David Allen. March 17, 19. *Woodseong* by Lee Wungjae. March 18

WEST COMMUNITY THEATRE

Parka Community Centre

Xenophobia. High energy rock musical. March 8-20

For entries contact The Association of Community Theatres on 267 2588

ACT

ANU ARTS CENTRE (49 4287)

Marionette Theatre Of Australia presents *General MacArthur* in *Australia* by Roger Pulvers, with puppets by Richard Bradshaw. Evenings March 3-13. *Smiles Away*, a puppet play for children, daytime performances, March 9-13

CANBERRA THEATRE (49 7800)

The Black Theatre Of Prague in *A Week Of Dreams*. March 1-6. Piccolo Teatro Of Milano in *Harlequin* and *The Others*. March 9-13

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE TROUPE

Treatment: a group devised piece about mentally handicapped young people. Presented by a senior group from Youth Theatre under the direction of Gail Kelly. In schools throughout March

PLAYHOUSE (49 8488)

On Our Selection by Bertie Basley (Theatre ACT — Fortune Theatre Company). Classic comedy adapted and directed by George Whaley, with John Denham, Julie Hamilton and Michael Boddy. To March 13

TEMPO THEATRE

Cole, a musical based on the life and music of Cole Porter. Theatre Three. March 6-27

THEATRE ACT (49 8488)

Emile by Ron Elska, director: Michael Boddy, with George Whaley and John Denham. Starts March 20. For entries contact Janelle Healy. 011 4769

NSW

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (029 8877)

Black Ball Game by Don Webb, director: Don Reid, designer: Warren Field, with Michael Ross. Don

Swanson, Ted Williams, Lorrie Stewart, Harold Jones and Ron Beck. To March 13

GRIMM THEATRE COMPANY (03 3817)

Stables Theatre: *Max* by Ron Blair, director: Peter Kingstone. To March 21

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (049 26 2526)

Playhouse: *Big River* by Alex Buzo, director: Asra Neeme, designer: Brian Nickless, with Julie McGregor and Vic Rooney. March 5-27

KIRRIBILLI PUB THEATRE (02 9415)

The Buccaneer Show by Ken Mathews and Steve Johnson, with original music by Adrian Morgan, producer: Bill Young, with Zoe Bertam, Paul Bertram, Allen Chappell, Marge McCloskey and Tony Martin. Throughout March

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (02 12 3411)

They're Playing Our Song by Neil Simon, director: Phil Cusack, with

Jack Weaver and John Waters

Throughout March

MARIAN-STREET THEATRE

(0800 3388)

What The Butler Saw by Joe Orton, director, John Misan, with Ron Fraser, Joan Bruce, Reg Gilham

To March 13

MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (0777 6585)

Have A Ball directed by Peggy Mortimer, director, Peggy Mortimer, with Enzo Tapparo, Dean Tapparo, Gerry Gallagher, Janet Brown and Peggy Mortimer. Throughout March

MINIPOD THEATRE (0889 0002)

Upstairs, Welcome The Bright World by Stephen Sondheim, director Neil Armfield, designer Damon D'Arcy, with Cathy Downes, Michelle Faardon, Russell Newman, Barry Otto, Katrina Foster, Max Gilead and Marita Harris. To March 13

The Suicide by Nicholas Erdman, director, Anthony Mellor, designer, Richard Roberts, with Peter Carroll, Angela Punch McGregor and Carole Skinner. Starts March 24

Downstairs, Females Parts by Franchella Hayes, director, Faye Makokoro, with Lynette Curran and Jude Kuring. To March 28

NSW THEATRE OF THE DEAF

(0271 1293)

Theatres for primary schools and The Dear Man In History for secondary schools, director, Iain Watson. Throughout March

PHILLIP STREET THEATRE

(222 8570)

The Admirable by Bill McNaughton, director, Peter Williams, with June Salter and John Hampson. Starts March 18

REGENT THEATRE (254 7986)

Barnars by Cy Culumian, Michael Stewart and Mark Brendle, director, Barryon Lee, musical director, Noel Smith, with Reg Livermore. Starts March 3

RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY

(0688 22 2352)

Errol Flynn's Great Big Adventure Book For Boys by Rob Grange, director, Colin Schumacher, musical director, Tom Webb, designer, Colin Mitchell, with David Wilson, Joanne Campbell, Tania Urquiza and Kevin Cox. Bloody cabinet which celebrates the greatest adventure of Errol Flynn's *Mr. Wagga Wagga* Leagues Club to March 7 at 8pm

SEYMOUR CENTRE (0802 0565)

York Theatre, *Emulsion* by Ron Edwards, director, Bruce Myles, with Frederick Parsons, Gary Down and Roger Oodger. Into March

Prezziolo Teatro di Milano's production of *Antes de la noche* with Fernando

Soler starts March 18

Downstairs, The Good Person of Seville by Bertolt Brecht, director, Mark Radwin, A Seymour Student Theatre production. March 9-27

SHOPFRONT THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (0802 3948)

Weekend workshops include playbuilding, mime, dance, puppetry, design, radio and video. Youth Theatre Showcase, *Overgrown* play built by the company, director, Emily Bryden and Don Munro. March 12, 13, 19, 20, 26 and 27

STUDIO SYDNEY (771 3333)

People Are Living There by Athol Fugard, director, Graham Correy, with Leah Stiles, Frank Brannan and Richard Evans. Starts March 11

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

(231 8111)

Theatre Royal, *Chicago* by Fred Ebb and Bob Fosse, director, Richard Wherrett, musical director, Peter Cadey, with Nancyc Hayes, Ronaldine Turner, Tony Donovan, Judi Connell, George Spartalis and J P Webster. To March 27

THEATRE SOUTH (042/28 2123)

Wollongong Tech Theatre, *We Can't Pay! We Won't Pay!* by Dano Fo, director, Des Davis. Throughout March

For entries contact Carole Long on 009 2010-357 1200

NT

ARTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (INT DIVISION) (01 5288)

Spore Pans Puppet Arts Theatre school and pub show, touring throughout the Territory. To March 12

DARWIN THEATRE GROUP

(01 8424)

Brown's Mart, Cloud Nine by Caryl Churchill, director, Ric Billinghurst. Starts March 11

TIE-DIE (08 0287)

Four On A Kind by Simon Hopkinson, director, Tony Soszynski. Touring Darwin secondary schools throughout March

For entries contact Turi Bow on 01 8424

QLD

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

(221 2777)

The Rocky Horror Show on Tour. Revival of the cult show that began it all. Starts March 24

LA BOITE THEATRE (08 1622)

Back To The Cremorne, director:

Graeme Jenson. Group-devised vaudeville show in the style of Brisbane's old Cremorne Theatre. To March 6

HELL AND HAY

by Richard Fotheringham, director, Robert Kingdom. Ironic look at the plight of Jewish internees in Australia during the 2nd World War. Starts March 18

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY

(221 3888)

SGO Theatre, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night* by Eugene O'Neill, director, Alan Edwards. O'Neill's semi-autobiographical masterpiece. Tragedy of a family 8 year with itself and its past. Starts March 18

THE TN COMPANY (082 2133)

Twelfth Night Theatre Roma and Juliet by William Shakespeare

director, Bryan Nelson. Shakespeare's perennially popular story of star crossed love. To March 18

For entries contact Jeremy Ridgman on 277 2519

TAS

POLYGON THEATRE COMPANY

(04 1018)

Audie Mama by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E Lee, director, Don Guy. The play follows the life of a wealthy New York socialite from 1928, through the Depression and into the 1940s. Toured by Tasmanian Theatre Company to Theatre Royal, Hobart 10 March 5, Civic Theatre, Burnie March 12-13, Princess Theatre, Launceston March 26-27

SALAMANCA THEATRE COMPANY

(03 5239)

The Forest Of The Nightly David Allen, director, Margaret Davis. A play based in south west Tasmania in search for Tasmanian Tiger, its effect on development interests in area and personal relationships of people concerned. Also performances of *Annie's Coming Out* and *Let's Wimpey's Wood Song*. Touring Hobart schools throughout March

TASMANIAN THEATRE COMPANY

(04 6992)

Theatre Royal, Hobart, *The Black Theatre of Prague*'s production of *A Week of Drama*, director, Jim Simec. Using the Black Theatre technique this is an evening of fantasy and magic. March 8-13, 4pm

Ten Tale Heart and *The Fall of the House of Usher* adopted by Stephen Berkoff from Edgar Allan Poe stories, director, Stephen Berkoff, with Stephen Berkoff, Terence McNally, Anne Stoen and John Prior. Total and intense theatre from London Theatre Group - a startling amalgam of acting, mime, music and lighting

Princess Theatre Launceston March 16-17 Theatre Royal Hobart March 19-27
For entries contact Jon Fogarty on 30 8032

VIC

ARENA THEATRE (419 1927)

Boots 'n' All directed by the Arena Theatre Company for secondary students 9-12. Director: Peter Charlton. Comedy focusing on that "Victorian obsession", footsie. Touring throughout March.

AUSTRALIAN NOUVEAU THEATRE (659 3650)

Ant Hill Dwellers. Roles by Michel Deutsch, director: Marc Adam. Drawing upon the madness of the German playwright Lessing, who purportedly ate himself to death in the Moscow gutter. To March 13. **With Strength And Delicacy** written and performed by Henry and Lynne. Two-woman show exploring female Australian reality from the 30s to the 80s. March 3-6.

Downstairs. Hamlet Machine by Heather Müller, director: Jameson Mignot. Starts March 24.

BANANA LOUNGE COMEDY ROOM (YO 419 2886)

Skid High Speed Night On The Town a comedy with Michael Bishop, Rob Meadowcroft and Robyn Giege. Throughout March.

BATMAN AVE BIG TOP (654 2484)

Sesame Street with all 25 singing and dancing characters, directed and choreographed by Robina Beard. To March 21.

COMEDY CAFE BYO THEATRE (419 2882)

Bus, Son Of Tram with Rod Wuentrock, Mary Kennedy, Geoff Briggs and Steven Blackburn. Throughout March.

FLYING TRAPEZE CAFE (417 3723)

Tony Rickards, Patcho The Clown and Cabaret Singers. Throughout March.

HANDSPAN THEATRE COMPANY (41 3978)

Jenky Malone and the Nine O'Clock Tiger. Adelaide Festival Fringe. AMP Theatre. March 10-19. *Bernly Of Berkley's Creek*, touring schools. March 1-19.

LA MAMA (347 8085)

Ramona And The White Stag by George F Walker. A black comedy. March 3-7. *A Death In The Family* by Colin Ryan, director: Clifton Wilkes. March 11-23.

LAST LAUGH THEATRE

RESTAURANT (419 6328)

International Comedy Festival continues. *White Family* (Web) with Captain Rock. To March 6. *Julien*

Chagrin (UK) March 8-20. *The Comic Sing* (UK) Starts March 22. **LE JOKER** (419 8228) Potpourri of new generation of comedy talent from all over Australia. Tues-Sat.

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (654 4000)

A Thermos Theatre. *Mimes Von Barnheim* by Gotthold Lessing adapted and directed by Ray Lawler. Popular comedy from German classical repertoire.

Russell Street Theatre. *Virginia* by Edna O'Brien, director: Judith Alexander. The lives and writing of Virginia and Leonard Woolf.

Throughout March.

Alibiendum 2: Rangoon Field by David Knight, directed and designed by Bruce Mylne. Throughout March.

MILL THEATRE COMPANY (652/22 2318)

Regular workshops for special interest groups including *Geelong Prison* handicapped, disabled and unemployed groups. *Mill Night* for everyone. Thur 7.30pm. *Mill Club* for children Sat. 9.30am.

MURRAY RIVER PERFORMING GROUP (663/21 7816)

Liquid Amber by Jack Hibberd, director: Richard Meredith. Theatre restaurant style. *Up to the Golden Wedding Anniversary* of Jock and Ruby. To March 27. *Clown Troup*. Appearing at Moomba and at Adelaide Fringe Festival. *They'll Tell You About Me* devised and performed by Robert Ferman, director: Peter Brown. *Prall* **Prall** Circuit workshops throughout March.

MUSHROOM TROUPE (341 7120)

Bomber written and directed by Alison Richards, designer: Kenneth Evans. Performed in conjunction with Handspan Theatre. Alexander Theatre, March 13-20. School hour performances March 16-19. Ringwood Cultural Centre, March 22-26.

Frankston Teachers College. Starts March 29.

PLAYINGX THEATRE COMPANY (83 4880)

National Theatre: *The Fall Of The House Of Usher* written and performed by Stephen Berkoff and The London Theatre Group and Tell Tale Heart. To March 13. Upstairs Playbox: *Lonely Larry*. Lower written and directed by Barry Dickens with Dennis Moore. To March 21.

Dwellers Playbox: *The Case Of*

The Starving Class and *Burned Child* by Sam Shepard, director: Roger Pulvers, designer: Peter Corinjan. Fresh from Adelaide Festival.

Alternating gigs, refer to newspapers. **TREASUREWORKS** (328 0444) *Stomping Mount Albert* By Tram from the prize-winning story by Paul Davies, director: Mark Sherratt in association with Moomba Festival. To March 14.

WEST (370 7034)

Final Stand, director: Jan Macdonald. One Man show with Paul Symmer. Performed in schools, footy clubs, social clubs and community venues. Starts March 15. *Whitewash* *Scabs* by resident clowns. Performances at Moomba, schools and community venues. Starts March 28. For entries contact Connie Kramer on 881 9448 or Susan Trotter on 531 4422.

WA

BENT PIN PRODUCTIONS (335 5482)

Couples by Mandy Brown and Murray Oliver. *TIE*. Two young people explore exploring and human relations while waiting at a bus stop each day. Director: Ken Kates. Touring schools throughout March. Public performances at PFT March 19-20 and 25-27.

HSIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE (321 6266)

WA Opera Studio. *The Swan River*. Stage Company in association with The Goethe Institute present *Maa and Mili* by Volker Ludwig, adapted by Andrew Ross. A play for children with familiar themes, very theatrical and very funny. March 1-5 & 12-13 at 10am and 12.45pm.

HIDE IN THE WALL THEATRE (381 3400)

Cloud Nine by Caryl Churchill and *My Name Is Pablo Picasso* by Mary Gage. To March 8.

PLATHOUSE (325 3566)

National Theatre Company. *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf* by Edward Albee, director: Rodney Fisher with Robyn Nevin and Warren Mitchell. Starts March 23.

Fields Of Heaven by Dorothy Hewitt, director: Rodney Fisher. Hewitt's latest play, commissioned by the National about romance and trauma in the wheelchair. To March 8.

REGAL (361 1987)

Interster and Michael Ethell by arrangement with Michael Coates. *Open House Guest* by Franco Ombreiro, director: Val May, set designer: Gene Banducci. Starts March 23. For entries contact Margaret Schwae on 347 1778.

COHAN ON CULTIVATING DANCERS

"Unless you have a place where artists can earn happily, you won't have a company. You will just be running a business," says Robert Cohan, Artistic Director of the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, on his way through Sydney to New Zealand to direct the first Otago-based choreographic course in the part of the world.

His conversation was peppered with such pertinent remarks, not delivered in any sense as a lecture but simply observations arising from his experience of running a class-based company of dancers for just on 15 years. He came to London from America as a modern dance evangelist, bringing his skill as a Martha Graham dancer, but soon on a policy of developing British dancers and choreographers. "What is the point of a British company doing American choreographers' ideas of dance?"

Starting with a school in the company's base, he was soon in the position of using only members of his own group to choreograph — mostly Robert North, Siobhan Davies, Richard Alston and himself. But in the past five years — "We are now in our second wave" — the company has been looking outside for creative input, and going through a few changes that may provide an example for companies anywhere in the world.

"With 21 people in the company, we have a very flexible arrangement. We spend six months of the year performing in large venues, such as the Sadlers Wells Theatre in London. Then we might split the company in two, preparing the same program at the same time with both groups, but performing in different theatres — smaller venues for five or 100 people at universities and cultural centers.

"Alternatively, we work with a smaller company — 12 to 16 dancers — while others are teaching or going off on their own. The dancers have sabbaticals of up to three months every three years. They work very hard, and I know from my own experience that you can only do it for so many months and then you go crazy. You have to go to another company or school — or just get out."

This flexibility makes "an awful amount of administration", but it does appear to be a way to stretch the dancers and sharpen their creativity without losing them permanently — though when the artistic directorship of Ballet Nouveau was offered to Robert North last year, there was, of course, no stopping him.

The school, which was set up in 1986 and

gradually so forming the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, has expanded into two studios and a theatre. It has 150 full-time students and about 600 people a week passing through it at the expense of dancer's fees. At the moment, it is awaiting validation of the BA Honours degree course it plans to offer in affiliation with the University of Kent.

"I have always felt that it was unfair to intelligent, talented dancers that they could not have a degree and be professionals at the same time. The problem has been to define practical work necessary, and the academic work. We have managed to devise a course that balances the two — and by tailoring yourself in aesthetics and other areas of the arts, you can help but come about more to the whole concept of dance as a performing art."

"Dance has been a poor relation to the changing aspects of teaching that have appeared in the last 20 years. Dance has

been taught by now, sometimes by brilliant teachers who can give you a technique, but I don't think it has been taught well. The dancer's study has always been a thing apart from what happens in the rest of society. Society has changed. You can't go on teaching the same way — people want more. The whole being of the dancer is not being cultured, only the body."

He advocates the introduction of academic subjects into dance — for example, the inclusion of history in the dances — who know their bodies better than any university students — are using the models in question. That would change the whole shape of dance teaching. Refining specific work to the actual life of the students will help them learn quicker because they are bringing more of themselves to the learning process."

COE AT SYDNEY DANCE

Meanwhile, the Australian Ballet's greatest performing loss in 1981, Kelvin Coe, has been working enthusiastically with the Sydney Dance Company. Graeme Murphy made him a local guest in December, the new ballet for the company's first program of their 1982 season at the Sydney Opera House.

SUCCESSFUL COURSES

The intensive two-week choreographic course which Robert Cohan directed in Auckland appears to have been a great success. Speaking to three of the four Australians who attended — Garry Lester, Wendy Butterworth and Beth Shenton — I heard nothing but praise for the opportunity they were given to work first手 with participating companies and dancers.

Naturally, there were the usual hours of drama and despair associated with such concentrated creative effort. But the focus on the choreographic process and its refinement, without interference in the individual choreographer's style or ideas, seems to have given the impetus that the woman was designed for.

The fourth Australian choreographer was Helen Herbertson, and the two New Zealanders were Mary Jane O'Reilly, director of Linde, and Peter Royle, ballet master of the NZ Ballet.

The Royal Academy of Dancing summer school for dancers in Melbourne appears to have met with similar success over its three weeks. It had a high-powered team of instructors flown in from England, some of them well-known from their Royal Ballet performing days. Ronald Bamler, Marjory Lane, Anne Houston, Brenda Last, Jaka Parrot and Helen Ward, who has already



Kelvin Coe at the Sydney Dance Co.

made her mark on dance in this country through her fine spent teaching with the Australian Ballet.

Both summer schools are expected to be repeated every two years, possibly adjusting the time span initially so that they take place on alternate years.

WHITLAM AND PAVLOVA

Margaret Whitlam, wife of the former Prime Minister, revealed a little known aspect of her life as a performer when she presented the 1981 Sydney Drama Critics' Award to the Sydney Theatre Company. Recalling her earliest memories of theatre-going, she told a rapt audience here, in a very young ballet student, she was taken by her mother to see Pavlova perform. "I embarrassed my mother terribly. At one point — when Pavlova must have been doing something very simple — I got up out of my seat and announced, 'I can do that!'"

JONES LEAVES AB HOTSEAT

The search for an artistic director for the Australian Ballet is on again after Marilyn Jones' announcement that she would not take up the option of her contract for 1983. Her decision did not come as a surprise to those who observed her increasingly weary in trying to cope with a job for which she was not as well suited or prepared as she had been in her remarkable dancing career. It is for her magical quality as a dancer that more people will remember her.

Let's hope that the selectors this time around will find an artistic director whose experience has shaped him or her to meet the demands of this enormous job, and that a strong team spirit can be built up between artistic and management staff. This will probably depend on the recommendations of the management consultancy team employed by the Company to look into its structure after the dancers' strike last year. Until these are known and implemented, it would be hard to ask anyone to take on the job.

OFF AGAIN, ON AGAIN

Early had the beautifully designed and printed colour brochure for the Australian Ballet's 1982 Sydney season arrived, then word went out that one of the programs had been changed. Back in one of its starring posts, Gina Tolley's *Reve Of Spring*. This had been part of an earlier idea — a 20th-anniversary centenary volume that "problems with the show" (that is, the cast of performing rights) put a stop to that, and Tolley's *Daphnis* and *Chloé* was substituted. In turn, "design problems" put that out of the running, and suddenly the "music problems" were solved. *Reve* is back on the program, with a selection of divertissements to help. Victoria Nebelits's *One Woman* will also be there.

ADT AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE



present the
WORLD PREMIERE

While We Watched

Choreographed by Jonathan Taylor

**ADELAIDE FESTIVAL OF ARTS
PLAYHOUSE
MARCH 9-13**

Counter bookings open now at all Bass outlets

**MELBOURNE PREMIERE
NATIONAL THEATRE, ST. KILDA
MARCH 25-APRIL 3**

Counter and credit bookings open from March 4 at all Bass outlets. Counter and phone bookings open at National Theatre, St. Kilda, 03 5153 2222, 03 5153 2223, March 4.

GENEROUS PARTY CONCESSIONS

Phone (03) 632854

Bankcard and Myer credit cards welcome

Further information day (03) 2122024



AN ABSOLUTE OBSESSION

Lindsay Kemp and the Dance

by Jill Sykes

Isadora Duncan often springs up in Lindsay Kemp's conversations. It's not surprising, since her idiosyncratic ideas of dance have parallels with his; several generations later. Encapsulated, they revolve around the determination to ignore established concepts of what dance is, and isn't — to present it as an unfiltered expression of life and love.

"I started dancing like everyone else — in other words, as children do," says Lindsay Kemp. "That wonderful first dance is one that I have fought to retain. Everyone tried to make me conform, to abandon that dance. Instead, I have dedicated my life to perfecting that dance."

"From the beginning, I tried to invent my own steps. Then I was sent to learn tap dancing at the age of two. I was considered very cute, very talented — very amusing, in fact. By the time I was eight, dancing was an absolute obsession. I ate it and slept it."

That was the age, he recalls, that he acted out Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for his fellow pupils at school. He was, he says, "quite naked" and confidently in command of all the roles. The presentation was promptly banned by his school, in which "drama was severely discouraged" — thereby giving him his first taste of controversy, a key to publicity.

It was a lesson well learned, as those who remember his first tour of Australia with Flowers will know. Had it not been for the defiance of moral purity protesting against nudity and



Lindsay Kemp

sexuality on stage, coupled with some realisations of sordid reality after the writings of Jean Genet, not nearly so many people would have discovered the theatrical magic that Kemp can create.

Even now, seven years later, the start of his current Australian tour in Brisbane filled that city's newspaper columns with shock-horror and brought a couple of members from the Force into the auditorium on opening night. Threats of arrest, however, came to nothing.

Genuine outrage is just as likely to be expressed by people in performing arts circles who can't pigeon-hole the

Kemp style neatly, or by dance purists who object to his description of his company members as dancers when some of them plainly aren't, and when song and spoken words can be as much a part of the action as movement.

"We dance with everything," says Kemp. "With the voice and the eyes and the hands... There are no books about my kind of dance. That is the hardest thing. It is true dance. It is the dance of the human spirit. In what I teach and what I direct, I encourage people to release their feelings through their fingers."

In other words, Kemp creates largely by instinct, drawing from the pooled

resources of his experience — his memories perhaps a little longer than life with the passing of the years, but all the more vivid for that. It seems valid, then, to return to his youth in England where his teenage years formed his ability to enthrall an audience. He takes up the tale:

"My mother sent me off to boarding school, to a naval college, and it was there that I developed my power to hypnotise people, to put them under a spell. At this very tough school, I had to cajole them to *survive* like Sheherazade. That meant I built up this wonderful repertoire — it is where *Solemn* began. I remember being naked with yards and yards and yards of lavatory paper..."

Extra-curricular activities apart, naval college was obviously not the place for the young Lindsay Kemp, so he left to go to art school in his home town of Bradford. One of his fellow pupils was David Hockney, who took him to see the Sadlers Wells Theatre Ballet where Kenneth MacMillan's *Swan's Conservatory* and Ninette de Valois' *Solemn* Program were on the program.

The effect was immediate. "I decided that was what I was going to do, and that was that." Dance as a career had crossed his mind before, and after sneaking off to secret ballet lessons he had auditioned for Ninette de Valois on one of her sweeps around the nation in search of talent. Her letter of refusal, declining him "temporarily and physically unsuited to a career in dance" had put him off.

This time, there was no stopping him. He set off for London and the Ballet Rambert, where he didn't last long. His theatrical dreams were filled with little girls in cream chiffon and the bald head of Robert Helpmann in the title role of *The Rake's Progress*. I used to wear one of my mother's stockings over my head... and then later I shaved my head completely bald."

One way and another, he managed to make a living out of performing. His work ranged from the striptease — Linda the Tropachorean Marion in a strip show — to the educational nursing schools as a member of the Paul Nurses, a group that got its name from its director, Beryl Paul.

The adventures that befall him in the divergent aspects of his career would fill a book. In fact, he is working on one



Kemp's version of *The Dream*

The Australian Ballet

invites you to its fabulous
1982 Sydney Subscription Season

See
International
Ballet at its Best

7 SUPERB PRODUCTIONS
7 SYDNEY PREMIERES

- Nutcracker
- The Hunchback of Notre Dame
- The Rite of Spring
- Our Waltzes
- Return to the Strange Land
- Trinity
- City Dances



Don Quixote — National Ballet of Canada

at the moment, a musing of anecdotes and performance notes with autobiographical details. On the professional side, these have become increasingly impressive since he was last in Australia, as his company has toured in Holland, Canada, Venezuela, Switzerland, Belgium, Mexico, Spain and Italy. His greatest triumph, he says, was the conquering of Paris at the Théâtre de la Ville.

Over these years, he thinks he has become more analytical of his work. He has also been inspired by the single-minded discipline of the dancers of the Ballet Rambert, for whom he created two dance works in the seventies, *The Porcupine Green Fly* and *Cloud/Garden*. But

even as he muses on his ambitions to work himself and his company harder and in a more disciplined fashion, he decides that exercises are essential for the blossoming of his creativity. He's probably right.

The people he has in his company today seem to have stronger technical backgrounds than in the past — Françoise Testory, for instance, used to be with Rambert — but his exasperation with classically trained dancers hasn't lessened. "It is not the style, it's the mannerism. It's the pomposity of the fingers, the narrowness of the range of expression — either their eyes are up to the heavens and their eyebrows

wed together, or they are wearing the smile of the Aurora, that toothy grin."

The time around, Australian audiences are being treated to the return of *Moulin* and a newer work, *The Dream*, which is evolving gradually in typical Kemp style from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They finish their Sydney season on March 18, moving on to Newcastle on March 19 and Adelaide from March 26 to April 8.

After that, it's back to Europe for their nineteenth tour of Italy and their first of Scandinavia. It's not like last time, when the company stayed and stayed. These days, they are much in demand.

Choreographic confusions and clarity

by Bill Shephard

Don Aker's Human Voice Dance Company has been performing for over two years now, they've garnered enough interest to be able to support several busy tours, a constant schedule of Canberra performances (their home base) and an extended tour of New Zealand.

This is an impressive track record for two reasons, firstly because that relatively new company is so small and secondly because it is devoted entirely to the outlook, esoteric choreographic/dramatic interests of one man, Aker.

Such a group is a common occurrence in a place like New York where there is a myriad of groups formed and nurtured under the light of one master, but it has hardly ever happened here in Australia.

Recently Human Voice has managed to attract quite a cultish audience for itself so far, but one will tell of the cult will remain such, as develops into a larger audience appreciative of its style attitude and movement.

The latest work to be seen in Sydney, the

full length, *The End Of A Dream* had a strange and interrupted sort of audience the night I was there. Ward had got about that the work was an attempt to capture of post-modern dance and "straight" visual theatre, as such there was an element of derision in some voices who apparently weren't used to coming to dance performances, and were intrigued by the artistry. The fact that they were more howled than enlightened (as were the "dancer" crowd) is an indication of the weaknesses of the work itself, apart from the gulf of incomprehension between the two theatrical styles.

In their purer aspects dance and the spoken word make their contributions to us in two different ways, speech is linear, allowing us to follow a line of argument, a progression of ideas, while dance is divergent, a necessary illustration in space and time that so often fits some through any number of interpretations.

What *End Of A Dream* fails to take into account is the basic difference, the two styles are like oil and water throughout the work, both forms are used but neither works in a dramatically synchronised way.

Taken as three distinct parts of a symphony, *End Of A Dream* has a long going for movement and expression, taken as a full length, continuous narrative, dragging on wavy strands of thought from one act to the next, the work is in due need of adjustment and clarification.

The dancers themselves, while devoted to

the school of Aker, could do far more themselves in getting the point across. They too are stuck between the two worlds of word and gesture. A good vocal coach wouldn't go amiss, while a more highly developed ability to incorporate emotion and thought in the quality of their choreographic attack is something we could all look forward to.

As to the direction of the Human Voice Company, I thought while watching Remichard's evening of classical Indian (Oman) Temple dancing, that Aker's dancers could do a lot worse than learn from such an ancient style.

Although the structure and form of such dancing may initially seem too rigid and over-disciplined, it is the wealth of personal detail and grace style that makes it enough, instructive and inspiring.

"Temple" dancing is not a skill easily learned by some, just as classical ballet is not "natural" or "evident" in its strict adherence to principle. It is "restrictive" only to a restricted mind, be it the choreographer's or the beholder's.

No doubt our understanding of the concepts and forms of Odissi dance was greatly aided by a thoughtful spoken and visual explanation of each dance before it was performed, but in the final analysis it was the choreographic clarity of intention and a wealth of personal detail that Remichard's (not Rudi, I hasten to say, Sydney Dance Company) brought to his performance that made it so illuminating and communicative.

NSW

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

continues its opening 1982 program. **New Additions I**, in the Open House Drama Theatre (205881) with new works by Graeme Murphy, Andra Tops, Carl Mompé. **New Additions II** opens March 10 in the Opera Theatre with a second Murphy work and new ballets by Graeme Watson and Barry Moreland.

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET starts to catch up on its postponed 1981 subscription performances of *Swan Lake* — this time in the Concert Hall, a first for a full-length classical ballet production. March 15-23.

The Australian Ballet will open its 1982 subscription season with a triple bill in the Opera Theatre: Glen Tetley's *Rele de Printemps*, Vicente Merello's *Car*

Matthews, and **divertissements**. From March 26.

LINDSAY KEMP AND COMPANY continue their season at the Capitol Theatre (212 3455) with *Dreams*, the fantasy version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, opening March 2, moving to the Civic Theatre, Newcastle (2 1977) March 16-20.

TAS

TASMANIAN DANCE COMPANY

(31 6678) will present its specially devised program of modern dance works in primary and secondary schools in Hobart and Launceston.

VIC

AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE

brings its new full-length work to

National Theatre, St Kilda (304 0211) after SA premiere season, as above. From March 25.

THEATRE OF PINA BAUSCH will also move on from Adelaide at Melba urna's Palace Theatre (231 0881) with *1982* her sixth and last record off last innocence. March 22 then 24-27.

HUMAN VOICE DANCE THEATRE presents Don Aker's new full-length work *The End Of A Dream*, a beginning through in setting an individual style for the company. Universal Theatre (419 3777) March 15-21.

WA

WA BALLET COMPANY at the Majestic 3 Theatre (321 6266) will present a section of Petipa's *Raymonde*, condensed by Gareth Welch into a one act version. Ray Powell's ailing old-timer *Ornith*

Five; Barry Moreland's beautiful, neoclassical *Spirals*; *Paradise Gardens*, a pas de deux by Walter Bourke to music of Ravi Shankar; *Images*, a contemporary classical work by Garth Welch to Rachmaninoff's variations on a theme by Paganini. Starts March 17

SA

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

THEATRE OF PINA BAUSCH in

Adeelaide Festival presentation (51 0121) provides a series of extraordinary dance-based theatrical experiences. *Kontakini* (Thebarton Town Hall, March 7, 9, 12, 13; *Bluebeard* (Festival Theatre, March 11, 16, 17, 1982; Opera Theatre, March 19, 20).

AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE

Playhouse (51 6151) will show a new full-length work by Jonathan Tayler, *While We Watched*, to a musical score devised by Ray Cook from compositions by Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff, Bernstein and others. March 9-13.

Fatal Johnny, Royalty Theatre (233 3788) is a new fantasy by Annette Raynor for Mummy's Little Darlings and ADT, a combination which produced the much acclaimed *Fatty Children*. Presented by young performers for school and family audiences. Midweek March 13 and 20.

ADELAIDE'S FESTIVAL FRINGE for 1982 includes eight dance events at a variety of venues and times. Among them are **ONE EXTRA DANCE**

THEATRE with extracts from *The Cleaved and Two Women*, *Family Portrait*, *Eggs on Toast*, at the Phoenix Theatre; **DANCE MACHINE DE PARIS** and **CANBERRA DANCE ENSEMBLE**

at the Balcony Theatre; the up-and-coming **ENERGY CONNECTION** at Union Hall; **AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES, WOOMERA**, Museum Forecourt, North Terrace. Full details Fringe program (233 6200).

LINDSAY KEMP and Company begin their season of his fantastical versions of *Flowers of the Opera* (Theatre (51 6171) on March 26.



Kemp's version of *The Divas*



For AD's Joanne Michel

PROBLEMS OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY

The Year Of Living Dangerously has been having an awkward time of it, and the least of its trouble being the difficulty of casting the role of a Chinese-Australian agent who at the Christopher Koch service in the oilfield, adviser and fixer for the journalists who'd the more-or-less hero, the role taken by Mel Gibson. But the financial hurdles at least appear to have been conquered with MGM funding. Remakes lead well to the Americans across *Suspicion*, *Woman*, *Alien* and *Breakfast*. In the novel, she's English. Oh, well.

STAR TREATMENT

Which reminds me that Mel Gibson, who does not see himself, as he said, as over

being a "star" had to have the crowds held at bay by sure police when he made a personal appearance in Perth for the launching of *Mad Max 2*. Wilshire, and leave him when he gave voice on a tropical vacation to *The Year?*

ON FRIENDSHIP

If you want to become a friend of the Sydney Film Festival, which needs friends to survive like all other arts enterprises, telephone the SFF's administrator, Lynn McCarthy at (02) 860 3979 and she will tell you about the benefits of being friendly. Bryan Brown is first endearer and Official Friend.

TRAVELLING CREAM

And the Travelling Film Festival, after touring Tasmania in February, travels on to



Mel Gibson — established for *Mad Max 2*.

March and April to Orange, Richmond, Armidale and Sawtell in NSW, Taree, Gunnedah and Port Macquarie, and Towns. The six films are the cream of the SFF 1981 program — *The Best Is Yet To Come* (Switzerland), *Body Of One* (Brazil), *The Axeman* (East Germany) which was voted best film, *Blue Collar* (USA), *Mon Oncle D'Amérique* (France) and *Monica Tries 200* (Spain).



Bryan Brown — Official Friend of SFF

AFI NEW BOARD

The new board of the Australian Film Institute, which was elected at the end of 1981, is Senator David Hamer, Michael Pate, John Flax, Julie James Bailey, Ray Salmonson, Don McLennan and Alan Thorpe — the reason mostly as before of political clear, commercial ambition and ethical accuracy.

GERMAN FILMS

The German Institute's program of German films for Sydney and Melbourne (Paddington Town Hall in Sydney, State Film Centre for Melbourne) includes a Rainer Werner Fassbinder film called *Udo Udo* starring Wanda Sebaghula of *The Marriage of Maria Braun* and soon-to-be-teen Udo Jürgens. The *First Policeman* starring Mario Schell (who's been Hollywooded when it was Hollywood) and a Jutta Speckert documentary called *Be Right and Be Afraid of No One* — a stirring title.



AN INNOCENT APPROACH

PHILLIP ADAMS, once known for his outspoken views, talks to **ELIZABETH RIDDELL** about his milder approach to the vagaries of the film industry.

"If there's one thing I have and fear," Phillip Adams said, finishing a conversation on the life and times of the Australian film industry and his own considerable part in it, "it's the mid-Pacific version of the mid-Atlantic film. For one thing, it doesn't work as a commercial proposition. As the British, who attempted the mid-Atlantic film — Lord Grade, for instance — and the Canadians, found, it is partly that they have left their local industry in tatters.

"We have to take stock of these events. If the British industry is risking a comeback, it turns to something of its great days, it is because it is striking its own idiosyncratic film.

"One of the things that people overseas like about Australian films, and a quality that will get them audiences that are not made up of millionaires overnight, is their rather innocent approach. That phrase was actually used by Pauline Kael, the film correspondent for *The New Yorker*, in an impromptu interview. I think on the kerb outside a cinema where she had just seen an Australian film which she liked. It is a quality she has emphasised in her reviews of Australian films and it has been noted by other respected critics."

Phillip Adams is head of an advertising agency, a writer of several articles for newspapers and magazines, a noted debater on communication, a source of good quotes on contemporary society and the Australian most often interviewed on the Michael Parkinson program. Or so it seems.

He is a producer in his own right

(*The Gathering of Friends*, and *Gerald, Gerald, Gerald*) and one half of Adams Packer Film Producers Pty Ltd. The other half is Kerry Packer of Australian Consolidated Press, Channel Nine, the late World Series-Cricket, coal mining, sky-reporting and quarreling. The word was, when the company was formed, that Adams would supply and organise the ideas and personnel and Packer would put up the money, but Adams says it was never the intention that Packer should put foot the bill. Adams Packer is in fact anxious to find investors from all over, including the US, so long as all the so-to-speak editorial rights stay with the company.

For instance, Adams could have raised American money to re-start the temporarily shelved *The Drovers Boy*, but it would have meant substantial American injection, including an American director. The director and screenwriter is a Melbourne man, Ben Lewin, and, Adams says, "I wouldn't have anybody do it but Ben. In fact once the budget was creeping up to the \$2 million mark, an unconscionable amount for an Australian film. Then a unrealising money. What is happening now to *The Drovers Boy* is that it is getting a major rewrite which will make it much more manageable, and it will soon go into pre-production."

The state of the game in other Adams Packer projects

We Of The Never Never no release date, but the score was being put together in January

Foghorn Rock, based on the novel,

Tow, by John Embilis, is being produced by Tom Jeffrey and Sue McMillan, with Lewin Fine-Gerald and Clark McQuade in the roles of Tom's parents. Paul Smith plays Tom. *Lonely Hours*, formerly called "Close to the Heart" is a tale thought to be like that of Francis Ford Coppola's newest \$30 million film called *One from the Heart*; has got as far as a second draft of a script by John Clarke (Fred Dagg) and Paul Cox, who will also direct. It is the story of a mature couple — Woods Hughes and Norman Baye — who meet through an introduction agency, and what comes of it.

Bioluminescence, a "creed score" on the US film industry with a script by John Clarke and players called Robert Redford, Paul Newman and the Marx Brothers who are not quite the way they sound.

Abramskabra, an animated film aimed at children, by Alex Stein. It will be the first animated film to use a new 3D system invented by two Australians, Mike Browning and Volk Moll, which requires only one lens.

Stein's other animated film, *Gerald, Gerald, Gerald* — from which, Adams says, he never expected very much in the way of box office — ran for seven weeks in Melbourne and then went into the Sydney Opera House cinema. It suffered from a lack of target, an unidentifiable audience, but Adams says it has sold satisfactorily in Europe.

Another film of the future is *Cavalia*, a story about a whaling ship, to be directed by Bruce Beresford, at present

working in Australia after his assignment to R and R's *Forrest Gump* fell through incidentally, and oddly, after what can be seen as the fairly sensational success of *Gladiator*. R and R have announced no further production plans.

Adams Packer has several times been headlined as "taking on" the tax office in an endeavour to get the controversial tax deduction legislation revised or at least clarified, but Adams' private attitude seems to be that the difficulties will iron themselves out. He notes that both the Prime Minister and the Treasurer have been on the set of *Kitty and the Bogans*, at Forest House Films, which features Liddy Clark and Val Lehman as two crime queens (presumably Kate Leigh and Tilly Devine) so that they could gain some understanding of the scale of energy (and money) needed to make a film.

"There is not much film investment cash about," Phillip Adams says "because there are plenty of other ways for people to play games with fancy money, rather than putting it into films. And there are difficulties attached to the legislation, to put it mildly."

"But I believe that our industry survives, and will survive, through government. That is, directly through subsidy from the Australian Film Commission and the State corporations and indirectly through taxation concessions. The system needs to operate in the spirit of the legislation as well as the letter. And some extraordinary things are likely to happen."

In fact, the very day we spoke an extraordinary thing did happen. It was reported that the Department of Home Affairs had confirmed a final certificate as an Australian film on *The Prairie Moon*, a variation on the Gilbert and Sullivan *Princess of Pimlico*, produced by JHI Production (gracious Ted Hamilton, well known Melbourne variety performer, who spent some years in California) and costing an estimated \$6 million.

The certificate means that it qualifies for some or all of the 1990 tax reduction available to investors. The film has American male and female leads — Kenny McDonald and Chris Atkins — as English director, Ken Annakin, and other people from overseas including an art director, special effects experts and an associate producer.

FILM -REVIEW

Heatwave — a splendid thriller

by Elizabeth Riddell

Heatwave has a lot of power and a load of headlong excitement, and it is emphatic in a manner that has been noticeably absent from a good deal of the Australian product. It is a film that knows where it is going although the story, of course, does not proceed to a solution, seeing that the subject is competition for the use, or exploitation, of land regardless of who is settling it in little old-fashioned dwellings. Its story that has no conclusion and has no tidy will be repeated, with variations in the sequence of events and the moral and mental violence that accompanies these events, many times.

Under the evocative title, promising a seedy and/or explosive experience, a collection of more or less dispossessed people conspire as developer encroaches his bulldozers and smart-slick advertisers against residents of an inner-city block he wishes to demolish in order to build on it a multi-million-dollar housing project he calls Eden, he ha.

The model of Eden is shown partly in the film, set on a cable in the office of the

architect, but it was beyond my powers to comprehend what it would look like when translated into bricks and mortar, or other concrete, glass and landscaping. As the model maker, Paul Probert, is also called an architectural consultant, along with Steve Lovell, I suspect he knows what he is doing.

The leader of the residents' action group is Mary Ford, who also publishes a little newspaper. Her supporter is Eric Dean, who works in a workshop and has at first an ambling, quirkily erratic attitude to the issue. When Mary Ford disappears the changes begin until she is on the row boat and all.

Meanwhile the developer is running out of money and time, the architect of Eden is asked to cut corners, the site is being damaged with fire and water, the users have lost a demolition row and the police harass everyone except the developer.

And Christmas rolls on, the heatwave pounds down, beautiful Sydney, and the sweat rolls down the faces and bodies in the smog of rich and poor skin, except for those who can work, drink and sleep without respiration.

The plot we have just economically outlined may remind some people of certain surrealised comedies which occurred in the last two or three years around Victoria Street, which hangs high above



Judy Davis — another illuminating performance — and Richard Mair

Why? I shouldn't bother you much about that, but rather than *Aladdin* as a splendid thriller with sexually conscious under-and-overtones (and some holes in the script that are hardly noticeable in the time of watching), some very good performances from actors who are familiar to all of us from the TV screen, and the wonderfully subtle, many-layered portrayal of Kate Dean by Judy Davis. She builds Kate up to be, logically, without ever exposing the mechanism of the development and without her ever. In the end, Kate has some hurtful left, as well as rage.

Another outstanding performance in this film is that of Chris Haywood as the bungnose developer, Peter Houserman, a cadaver with the usual taste of how he made his first dollar and nobody was going to stop him making his second, or making Haywood has a wonderfully low-budget pain. When blocked in his intentions he looks as if the blood is going to come spurting from the top of his head. The character is well written, and works successfully against the roles of intravenous resident, union leader, raconteur, Mr Sam and Houserman's lover played respectively by Don Cheadle, Dennis Miller, John Mellencamp, Frank Galati and John Gregg. The senior performers who recalculates no coddle and year bleed with his neuroticism and vanity produced superb warmth in Graham Norton, Carol Burnett, Gailan Jones and Tim Buswell as the matchmaking Mary Puff, Barber the strip tease, and a finely balanced anti-Eaten-er named Anne.

The hero of the piece is the archetypal Stephen West, played by Richard Marx, and here the structure weakens, not because Marx is not a good actor but because the character as written is not convincing. It is hard to see how he ever got mixed up with his partner, Robert Duncan (Bill Nauset) who appears not to be able to draw a straight line, much less participate in it. The western here also gives Stephen a wife, played by Anna Jackson, as unlikely as the partner. On second thoughts, perhaps Stephen just loves to be bullied, as opposed to the wife and partner who can do it.

The director and screenwriter, with Marc Rosenberg, of this film, which should guide the local industry a good path in the right direction, is Philip Noyce, who made *Neurofuzz* and before that *Badlands*. *Neurofuzz* deserved and got a big commercial success in Australia and is doing well abroad. Noyce and his producer, Hilary Lessard, have assembled a most accomplished group of co-workers, among them the cinematographer Vincent Morton, Cameron Alcott for the music, production designer Ross Major and whoever helped the director set up the stunning postmodern scene of the New Year crashing in at Kings Cross.

The distributing company is Roadshow.

-GUIDE

WATCH FOR THESE

ON GOLDEN POND is a celebration of the pains and pleasures of ageing, somewhat marred by an embarrassing performance from Katharine Hepburn and a 13 years old boy actor, Doug McKeon, whose chorus girl looks work against one's sympathy. But Henry Fonda is there with all the best lines, and Jane Fonda with the best body.

SOUTHERN COMFORT, an uncomfortable film about National Guard soldiers of ex-slaves in Louisiana swamps, seems to be making the point that educated volunteers react more bravely and sensibly in awkward situations, is shot at by the swamp-dwelling Cajun trappers, than your average peasant, or red neck. Keith Carradine and Powers Boothe star and survive.



Powers Boothe as Charles Hardin in *Southern Comfort*.

PRINCE OF LOVE is a triumph for Jannet Simmons as Frieda. OH Lawrence's dynamic, aristocratic German wife and gipsyish companion, but everybody does well in this absorbing, enchanting English film with Ian McKellen as Lawrence and Penelope Keith as doct, bumbling devoted Dorothy Brett.

BLOW OUT — all putt and no blow, somebody kindly said, but it is Brian de Palma film which means it is very well directed for thrills, and to more than the brain of Palma (Carved, Dressed To Kill) seldom sapient John Travolta actually stakes a claim as an actor with his portrayal of a sound effects man indulging his hobby of recording night bird calls, who ends up shot on a murder.

TRUE CONFESSIONS has Robert de Niro and Robert Duvall as brothers, a priest and policeman in 80's Los

Angeles, the city of 50 shades. Remarkable performances in a story of shadiness, but very entertaining, political aquaer. From Gregory John Dunne's novel, now in paperback, which he himself called "a mosaic of petty treasons".



Robert de Niro, the Catholic priest in *True Confessions*.

MAN OF IRON is so close to what seems to be happening in Poland that it would be a must, even if not super. It is made by Andrzej Wajda, who continues his exploration of Polish history started in *Man Of Marble*. There is a lot of documentary footage taken at the time of the Gdańsk strike. The hero is *Man Of Marble*'s son, and many characters in the earlier film appear.

SHOCK TREATMENT has a lot of crazy people in it, not crazy in the Three Stooges genre but spin-offs from *The Rocky Horror Show* (including Brad and Janet) and expertly organised by Jeff Sherman. The action takes place in a television show whose sponsor is named Farley Flavours. Among those present are Barry Humphries, Richard O'Brien and *Rocky* star Neil Campbell.

CHARIOTS OFFIRE — the sleeper of 1981 and still going strong before audiences which have been lured into the cinemas of all states by powerful word-of-mouth recommendation. But once gone, it may never come back, so hurry on down.

SUTHERLAND ON SUTHERLAND

Following the resounding success of the free opera performance of *La Traviata* in Sydney's Domain — a collaboration between the Forest of Sydney and the Australian Opera — the organisers have announced a return host in 1983.

Despite the original date of January 14 being rained out and the event transferred to the following Monday, an estimated 20,000 people witnessed that historic performance and before the concert had even commenced Patrick Venet, General Manager of the Australian Opera, announced from the stage "We'll be back again next year". Plans are already being hatched for an spectacular a follow-up next January.

Meanwhile, spurred on no doubt by the accolades showered on the event by the public and media, Alderman Douglas Sutherland (no relation to the diva), the Lord Mayor of Sydney, has gone into print advocating the construction of a permanent music bowl to house future such events. Times from opera have been responsible for

galvanising more than one political revelation over the years, why not move a City Council to provide a much needed public facility? *Wander of wonders*, maybe even the ABC might venture out of its self-imposed concert cassocks to perform outdoors!

IAN CAMPBELL FOR THE MET

General Managers are back in the news again? Sutcliffe of the season has been the subject and usually unreported announcement that Ian D. Campbell, General Manager of the highly successful State Opera of South Australia since 1974, will leave the company in September for a position with the New York Metropolitan Opera. In October he takes up the post of Australian Arts Commission Administrator, where which will bring him into close and frequent contact with the Met's musical Music Director, James Levine in the planning of repertoire and seasons and the casting of productions. He will be immediately responsible in this capacity to the legendary Joan Ingpen who over the years has

developed more operatic careers than most of us have readings.

Campbell's résumé has seen the South Australian Company subside and grow in stature as well as in turnover and he leaves it in potentially good shape. At the time of writing no decision had been made on a successor in Adelaide but it is believed that inquiries would be welcomed by the Board from prospective candidates.

THE BATTERED BRIDE

The aptly "Frog House of the Year" Award would have to go to the running study that found red-under-the-bed in the production notes of The Australian Opera's *The Merry Widow*. Lamentable, the production certainly was and I have certainly never been of the party that advocates that art should be uniform, but that poor Mr Koen should have to be "a KGB agent" in order to be a bad opera producer seems more Brisbane audiences and have no idea, however, that their minds will be poisoned when the Australian Opera's season opens there on March 13. The production is in new hands, Young Australian producer, Andrew Sinden, recently returned from London to rework from the retrospective, rather pastel, mannered and place it firmly back in its intended rustic charm.

Another welcome renewal for Brisbane will be John Coxley's superb production of *Madame Butterfly* which the producer has recently returned to Australia to nerve. Audiences there will be particularly fortunate in having the opportunity of contrasting Joan Caron and the New Zealand soprano Lynne Caron who will alternate the role of Cio-Cio-San.

THE DIVALL DECADE

It is a measure of some sorts of the instability, or at least lack of continuity in the arts in Australia, that it should be not only remarkable that Richard Divall is celebrating in that year the 10th anniversary of his appointment as Musical Director of the Victoria State Opera, but that no-one else can lay claim to as long a tenure in such a position with any other company. Divall, OM, returns shortly from London, where he has been studying *The Ring* with Sir Reginald Goodall, which would seem to indicate that the company has not abandoned the idea of mounting it at some future date despite The Australian Opera's announcement of its own intentions to proceed with *The Cook* commencing in 1984. Meanwhile, soon after Divall's return, General Manager Ken McKeown-Ferber goes to the United States to take up his Mollie Fellowship awarded late last year.



Joan Sutherland — "back next year".

THE MASS SPIRIT

It's curious how a number of quite related events can suddenly be seen to sum-up the spirit of the times. In three very different exercises in three different cities opera companies confronted the problem of dealing with a mass audience under very less than normal operatic conditions.

In early December Canberra Opera presented Verdi's war-torn *Aida* in the National Indoor Centre over two nights, playing to four thousand people on each occasion. In Sydney in mid-January the combined forces of the Festival of Sydney and the Australian Opera staged an open air concert performance of *La Traviata* in the Domain to twenty thousand people and on February 6 the Victorian State Opera also "went public" at the Myer Music Bowl with a free concert of highlights from operas and operetta. Each occasion was a first for the company concerned.

It is not my purpose to review any of these activities as performances. Rather, it is as events coming so close together within a two month period that we should consider how extraordinary they were and speculate on what sudden rush of blood to the managerial head has brought them about. At a time when the "flagship" mentality of "National" companies seem to have a strangle-hold on Government thinking and, because of the apparently favoured treatment in their 10% increase to the Australian Opera (along with the Australian Ballet and Trust Orchestras), the mere idea of these extravagant fancies in our cultural make is an embattled one.

Justin Macdonnell looks at the massive audiences drawn to three recent community opera events

"Incredible" is Jones's words, was never more apparent than when literally hundreds of people got on buses and planes from all over Australia and, for all I know, came on foot to Canberra for *Aida* and between ten and fifteen thousand people remained standing in the drizzle to hear the last act of *Traviata*. The conditions at all of these events were less than congenial and yet they came.

There was in the two former cases an atmosphere almost of pilgrimage as we tramped over the recently hallowed earth of the Canberra Institute of Technology or into the soggy Domain. Even the departure from the venue was made difficult by pouring rain. No one seemed to care. They had come to witness a miracle — a great collective event. It was somewhere between a VFL final and Fauna. In neither case did the Virgin Mary appear, though by and large the creedal goals were scored

and the public was dazed by the sheer — manœuvrability of it all — the largeness-fitness which of the performing arts opera provides better than any other.

What does it all mean? In the context of the Inquiry into opera and music theatre conducted by the Australia Council in 1979/80, the committee commissioned a poll from ANOP that revealed that while 62% have never been to the performance of opera and 34% indicated that they thought it unlikely that they ever would, 79% considered that it was important that Governments fund opera.

One is, of course, inclined to be somewhat sceptical about statistics gathered in this fashion even though there is no reason on the face of it actually to disbelieve them. Events such as these mass concert activities do however go somewhat towards justifying the statistics' claim. They also provide some measure of access to that frighteningly high percentage who "thought they probably never would". When one considers that, in essence, the quality of choice involved is not all that different from saying that in the rest of their lives "they probably never would have a Chinese meal" these events develop significance to the future of the art form.

The need to go out into the market place and if not actually force feed the community then certainly tear down some of the barriers — whether they be open house walls or barriers of the mind — and make the activities more welcoming is at last becoming foremost in opera management thinking. The



*John Shaw and Donald Shaw in Canberra Opera's *Faust* — an atmosphere almost of pilgrimage.*

Australian Opera has already announced that it proposes to make "Opera in the Park" an annual event and Dame Joan Sutherland, who sang the role of Violetta in the inaugural concert, has said in an interview that she expects to be "back next year". For better or for worse the egalitarian spirit is still very close to the hearts of most Australians and the feeling that the great diva is really "just an ordinary person like you and me", however tortured a divinity, was made very real to people by an event such as the Dame's performance. There was a genuine sense in which, more than all the Friends, lunches, lecture series or educational programmes, that night a work went further towards demystifying the opera artist in our society than any other I can recall. There was a nearly perverse sense in which the audience almost seemed to rise in order to test how the artist would react. They wanted to be reassured that despite their great artistry, and in some instances their exalted position in our society, they were prepared to exhibit the classically alleged national trait of "yucking it up".

But the spirit of the times is clearly as alive in Canberra and Melbourne as it is in Sydney and their performances too represented a striking education in the relationship between performer and audience.

It is not a question in any of these cases of necessarily making new

converts to opera who will immediately rush off to buy a subscription — though that may well happen. At *Faust*, of course, the audience had already bought seats — eight thousand of them! — the significance is that in all cases they are more a public celebration of the fact that the one area of the performing arts in which Australians have been acknowledged to excel — and indeed excel on the world stage for over a century — is singing and more particularly singing opera.

These events are a public tribute to that greatness and they draw on a vein of public emotion not at all unlike that which creates the public frenzy around Melbourne Cup Day when the people who would never dream of having a bet and would scarcely know one end of a horse from another go to parties, listen to the race and enter a sweep. These garrulous nights of opera, while certainly they entertain and hopefully stimulate, went further in that they reassured us of the importance of this great irrational amalgam of theatre and song in the context of the live arts, reiterating the blood sport element that is never far from an opera performance of worth. They publicly confirm our pleasure and pride in having it in our society even when we may not avail ourselves of it frequently or at all.

Whether now? The Australian Opera is determined to make an concert in Sydney an annual event. There has been talk by them of similar exercises in other cities. The VSA had not at the

time of writing publicly stated its intention for the future, but in a city where "Music for the People" in the Myer Music Bowl has long been an important tradition it would seem logical for them to keep up what they have started so well. Especially as the inaugural effort has been supported by the State Ministry of the Arts.

Canberra Opera, maddeningly, has opted not to repeat their experiment in 1982. One understands only too well the enormous effort that went into the assembling of such forces — over 600 participants alone — for a company with minuscule staff and resources. But taking the bull by the horns is exactly what it is, or should be, all about after so spectacular a start, and I believe strongly that even the financial backing needed to stage concerts or productions of this kind can be found. Anyone who attended any of these spectaculars would have come away expecting their organisers to be backed with sponsorship offers from the commercial sector. I hope they will be because rarely could a sponsor be offered better value for the investment of its corporate dollars.

Much has been said, especially of late, of the need to involve the electronic media in the dissemination of opera. There has been considerable talk of the need to revive live production to make opera more accessible to the population, especially in isolated areas.

There would be few who would not applaud the principle and since it has been conclusively demonstrated that the techniques exist for this to be done at a very high standard one can only endorse the efforts of management to make it happen. But, frankly, if it ever became a choice between the great nights of mass spectacle of last December and January and opera on the box, my weight would be all on the side of the former. Opera is after all an urban activity that arose in the great centres of population, political and social hubbub, and learning, and it is sustained by the continuing diversity of modern society, its interests and tastes in what is still basically an inter-faith plural society. That too needs celebrating. I hope that for the sake of the theatre arts in Australia and their continued ability to "buzz" the community, our opera managements stick to their guns and push ahead with more great mass nights. The world needs them.

Summer season — some musical mundanities

by Ken Henley

Andrew Sache's re-staging of Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* is not only a creditable salvaging of the drama that passed for a production in Sydney last October, it is significantly better and stronger than the staging that Sache had managed to put together in Melbourne by November. Only the Sydney dancers are less convincing than their southern counterparts.

There is only one change in casting, Ben Stephens singing Jeníček, the man whose bride is bartered, in place of Robin Donald. Stephens makes an intelligent character, but his voice was in poor shape, judged even on its own standards. Donald looks more the village lad, and had sung beautifully, although pushing harder at the very top of the range. As Matronka, Glenda Fewes remains delicious. May she be seen more often in such roles, and occasional infusions as a folk coloratura.

The opera itself showed its relative class by improving rather than growing more tedious on account of the latter. Václav is probably Graeme Dyer's most convincing comic character, while Geoffrey Attwells gave us a very quick overture that never faltered, and kept the Hanoverian Sinfonia Orchestra in good rhythmic shape and full tone. The sets are still poor-provided in standard *Bartered* fashion, though a more慷慨 is barely worth the asking price of \$35. (Donald Shanks in the marriage broker is good, without anything like the company that he brings to patriarchal roles in tragedy, what is more, to say of the comedies of those centuries which were also part of the AGO's recent season at the Opera House?

From the recording under Richard Bonynge which has been available for some years, I had concluded that *Rusalka* by William Shield was a very poor pastoral compared with, say, Haughey's *Arne* and *Giselle*, but *Rusalka* comes from the dimpled of Maeterlinck's *Feydeau*. Only Christopher Kentish's sense of style, induction and the guidance concerned Kenneth Russell's design/drug; the audience consistently clapping with, rather than at, the performers. Gross technical of a, corn was ripe in the manner of the piece too. Only Jennifer Birmingham, a retired yokel William by name, sang with the size and quality of sound one expects from this company.

Last month I asked some hard questions about the national company's role. By keeping an employment roster of the operatic



AGO's production of *The Bartered Bride*. Photo: Bruno Ganz.



James Newbould, Anna-Maria McDonald and Paul Ferris in *Rusalka*.



Paul Ferris and Jennifer McGregor in *Bartered*.

looking when singers who sing in Rousse and Offenbach's *Barber* which followed it, the company is perhaps securing the future of the art form in Australia while enabling more distinguished voices to be heard against indisposition in leading operas. But only Jennifer McGregor and the upper reaches of baritone Michael Lewis sounded neither of the first two operas as though they should be cast in soloing in this company, which ought to be as far above its regional brethren in size and quality of tone as Coates' Garden in above ENO or the Metropolitan New York City Opera.

By far the most distressing aspect of Rousse is the banality of the music. If anyone composed as often as Offenbach had been guilty of that much, it would well not be worth revival, but a decent commercial house writing in Sydney now could surpass it. Yet it is given

in the season for one of the worst productions (again by Christopher Kentish) than one is likely to see on or off the operatic stage. What a pity!

Kentish's adaptation has presented that Offenbach's company, "les Bouffes-Parisiens" in touring Australia. Theophrastus is set in China, and is of a sleep-inducing audience to make *Cléa-Cla* (Chou) more as exalted as *Trovador*. Kentish gives us a choice of Chinese warren costumed like Bondi bathers, a set (again from Kenneth Russell) which consists of artfully laid on the piece while never ceasing to believe in, and seem very funny stage business. To what end?

If the purpose of trying to revive or revive the operatically illiberal was to serve as a long-term answer to Wilson's

writing of Chaliapin's *Fair Slave*, it was not artistically justified. Despite some all-conceived "fairy-tale" sound effects in Malina's convoluted, baneful score, the opera does point to the screen comic nature of Chaliapin. This comedy is worth taking seriously. And it provided the only truly operatic singing of the night. Gregory himself is the bear-like neighbour demanding payment of a debt, enraged to

sing with extreme force without actually shouting — until he succumbs to the charms of the widow Pepona (Heather Begg, who always sings and acts like an angel of the first rank). As her servant, Robert Eddie was also in fine, full voice.

A conservative set and production, both sumptuous in Sydney, were complemented by an assured musical reading under the direction of David Kram. The tumultuous

applause which greeted the final curtain was surely a graceful tribute to the singers for producing the sounds that make opera artists of whole audiences. The earlier splendid productions of Christopher Renshaw which were largely wasted on amateur standards would be better employed in the non-operatic theatre — unless Mr Bonython can search neglected scores worthy of our consideration.

OPERAS

NSW

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA (3 6546)

Lucrino Borgo by Donizetti (in Italian). Dame Joan Sutherland stars as one of the most fascinating and enigmatic women of history, the infamous Lucrezia Borghese, in this stunning new Concert Hall staging of Donizetti's compelling opera. Conductor: Richard Bonynge; producer: Georgi Ogurcov; designer: Kungjun Fredriksson; cast: Joan Sutherland, Bernadette Cullen, Lamberto Furlan, Robert Alman. March 14.

Norma by Bellini (in Italian). The nineteenth century saw the flowering of bel canto operas — literally beautiful song — and of these Norma was one of the greatest. A magnificent orchestral score is matched by vocal fireworks as the story moves from the sacred glovers of the Orveja to the massive funeral pyre on which Norma and her lover are doomed to die. Conductor: Richard Bonynge; producer: Christopher Renshaw; designer: Fiona La Manca; cast: Rita Hunter, Rosemary Gurn, Anson Austin, Clifford Grandi. March 25.

Comedies Of Three Cantares: Rosina by William Shield (English); conductor: Richard Bonynge; producer: Christopher Renshaw; designer: Kenneth Rowell.

The Bear by William Walton (English); conductor: David Kram; producer: Robert Loveloy; designer: Tom Lingwood.

Baltschieder by Jacques Offenbach (French/English/Italian "concerto"). Conductor: Richard Bonynge; producer: Christopher Renshaw; designer: Kenneth Rowell. Robert Loveloy's exuberant production of *The Bear*, featuring Heather Begg's independent performance as Pepona, is joined by two repertory comedies. Shield's *Rosina* premiered in 1962 and Offenbach's knockabout one-acter

Baltschieder. March 3. *Medama Bullentra* by Puccini (in Italian). Conductor: Stuart Challender; producer: John Copley; designer: Henry Bardon and Michael Stennett with Rhonda Bruce; Kathleen Moore, Serge Baraglin and John Pringle. Copley's highly successful production is a masterpiece of the AD's suspense and features a series of the company's leading house talent. March 8.

QLD

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA

The Barbered Bride by Smolens (in English). Conductor: Geoffrey Arnold; producer: Andrew Sinclair; designer: Saska Heyndre; choreographer: Asinda Sturrow; with Judith Sabba, Ron Stevens, Graeme Ewer and Donald Shearer. This disappoing rendition of the Czech favourite has been largely revamped for the summer season with hopefully happier results. March 13, 15, 18, 20.

MADAMA BUTTERFLY by Puccini with Joan Sutherland or Lynne Cartlton, Kathleen Moore or Jennifer Birmingham and Lamberto Furlan or Serge Baraglin. March 13, 17, 19, 20, 22. Her Majesty's Theatre 221 2777.

SA

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL STATE OPERA OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Makropulos Affair by Janacek (in English). The Festival production will be produced by Blaith McNaughton conducted by Denis Vaughan and designed by Brian Thompson (sets) and Luciana Arrighi (costumes). Elisabeth Soderstrom sings the enigmatic Emilia Marty in this Australian premiere. March 4, 6, 10, 13, 15. Festival Theatre — 31 6161. *Moyna Fludde* by Britten. Musical

director: Dean Patterson; producer: Brian Delman; designer: Casey van Stelle. This delightful Children's opera based on the medieval *Chaucer*. *Miracle* plays promises to be one of the gems of the Adelaide Festival. From March 8. Scott Theatre.

ACT

CANBERRA OPERA

The Elan of Love by Donizetti (in English). March 17, 19, 20. Canberra Theatre — 49 7900.

VIC

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA

La Traviata by Verdi. With Joan Corden, Anson Austin, Robert Adman, Cynthia Johnston, Rosemary Gunn, Roger Donald, John Gérardin, Peter Van Der Stoel. John Wagner. Opera March 31. Princess Theatre — 652 2911.

VICTORIA STATE OPERA
Music Theatre Season 1982
A Certain Twilight by Mark Foster. A Double Dissolution by Peter Chapman. *Hunger* by Neil Clifford. Conductors: Andrew Cleene and Graham Cox; director: Peter Jordan; designer: Mark Wagner. Three world premieres by young Australian composers resulting from the Music 1981 composers competition. March 11, 12. Universal Theatre.

WA

WA OPERA COMPANY

Basically Brahms with W.A. Arts Orchestra. March 27. Perth Concert Hall — 325 3099. *A Gilbert & Sullivan Special* devised by John Miles, with Terry Johnson, James Malcolm and Voices (a five member vocal consort). Memorable songs from nine of the Savoy Operas. March 11-27. Hotel in the West — 321 2403.

JOBs FOR THE BOYS AND GIRLS

The arts in Australia have never been so stable. With funding generally reduced and companies and organisations finding it there is a growing army of free-lance contractors available.

At the same time there are a number of interesting top jobs on the market.

- Director, NSW Conservatorium of Music (through the resignation of Rex Robson, the great conductor who brought the "Cox" into the 20th Century).
- Director, Music Board, Australia Council (the good Doctor don't apparently well write film music).
- General Manager, State Opera of South Australia (Ian D Campbell has landed the plain job of Assistant Artistic Administrator at the Mac, although he won't be taking it up until October).
- Programming Manager, Adelaide Festival Centre (Tony Russell's resignation before his tragic death).
- General Manager, Queensland Lyric Opera Company (Anthony Jeffrey is only half-sitting for the moment).
- Manager/Labourer, Australia Music Centre (Yes, the Centre's enforced holiday is about to end).

And who knows? Some of the new positions created at the re-amped Australia Council may not be filled internally.

FOGG JOINS ABC

Anthony Fogg, brilliant pianist and Programme Adviser to the Seymour Group has joined the staff of the Federal Music Department of the ABC. Let's hope some of his musical and enterprising programme initiatives in the sound waves.

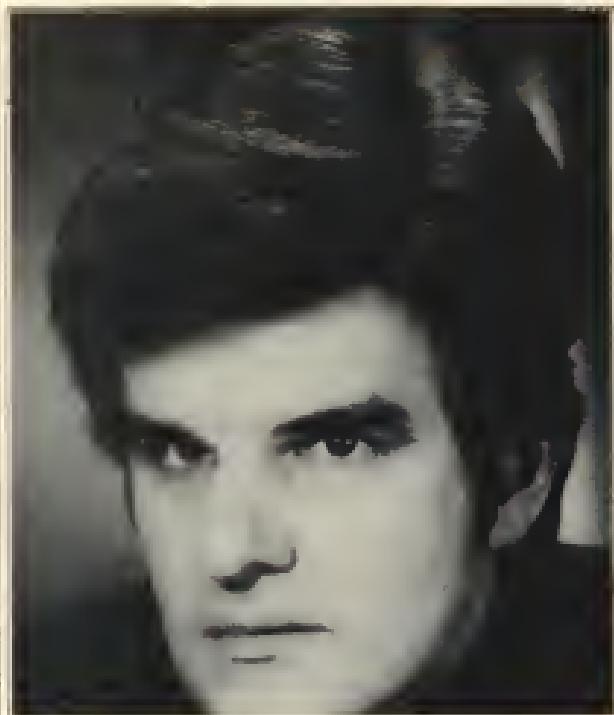
PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE

The proceedings of the WA Seminar on Music and Dance, presented by the Musicological Society of Australia, can now be ordered from the Music Department of the University of WA.

COHAN'S MUSICAL DIRECTOR

"UNIMPRESSIVE"

The First International Dance Course for Choreographers and Composers (see Dance section) took place in London in January, with funds from the Music and Theatre Boards, as well as the International Committee of the Australia Council, the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and the



Stuart Challender

Guillemot Foundation

Directed by Robert Cohen, Artistic Director of the London Contemporary Dance Company, the Musical Director was Geoffrey Bulpin, now famous for his music for the new BBC series *Breakfast Round*. Our four young composers, Brian Howard, Graeme Kocher, James Paet and David Wainwright, were not so impressed with him. They were amazed at his lack of knowledge of the contemporary repertoire and of contemporary notation.

FIRES OF VICTORIA

There are persistent rumours that Christopher London-Gin, English conductor now settled in Victoria, hopes to form a new group "somewhere between The Fires of London and the London Sinfonietta" and with a more-or-less base in Keppel and Strzelecki's the first proposed programme

NEW AO CONDUCTOR TO HOLLAND

Stuart Challender, the new young resident conductor at the Australian Opera, has made a striking impression with his large and robust performances of *Madame Butterfly*. In a generous gesture of great confidence, Richard Bonynge has invited Challender to conduct John Sutherland in three performances of *Luisa in Holland* during March.

STEEL CONSULTANCIES

Anthony Steel, Consultant to the AETT has taken up two other consultancies of some note: to the Singapore Arts Festival and to the classical music arm of Michael Tilson Thomas. His company has also recently put to a feasibility study for a "celebration" in the greater western suburbs for 1983.

MUSIC IN THEATRE

by James Murdoch

In addition to the vast amount of music performed in the concert halls in Australia, there is a considerable body of work being performed in Australia's theatres. It rarely carries with it a mention in a review, but it is likely that the public has heard more Australian music in the theatre than ever it has in the concert hall or even radio.

The Australian Music Centre's *Descriptive Catalogue of Australian Composers*, published five years ago, contains some astonishing facts.

Incidental Music for Drama: 59 composers in 227 productions

Musical Theatre (Musical, operetta, pantomime, revue, rock opera, puppet productions, young people's musical dramas): 93 composers in 114 productions

Musical for Dance: 66 composers in 138 productions

Opera and Music Theatre: 77 composers in 84 music theatre works and 133 operas and operettas

The idea of a composer-in-residence is catching on. The Old Tote for many years invariably employed Sandra McKeown in at least 25 productions since 1969. Helen Gifford has composed for the Melbourne Theatre Company during the '70's and her splendid music has elevated many a production. Jim Carter and Nick Lyne have worked with many theatre companies, including the Nimrod, The new Lighthouse Company in South Australia now is working solidly with Sarah de Jong (Mrs. Leon Neira). The Sydney Theatre Company has already worked with Sarah de Jong and has recently invited Brian Howard to compose music for its new *Macbeth*.

Every drama and dance company



A Feminist cartoonist's drawing — based on Maxwell Beesley's *Verdi's Icons*

should have a music adviser. Not necessarily a composer (they tend to want to compose *survive*) but someone who can marry the most appropriate composer to a diversity of plays and who can tell an artistic director of a dance company that the music he or she wants to use (or an invited guest choreographer wants to use) is a disaster before too much time and money has been spent on it.

There is also the question of recorded music used in theatre. In the past, it has been too much copy-citing through someone's record collection,

and some appalling music has been inflicted on us in this way.

Another aspect is the use of Australian music. Better a third-rate piece of Australian music than a third-rate non-Australian work. Better still a first-rate piece of Australian music. More is around every year.

The situation with musicals (musical comedy) is still vexed. In the abhorred *Report to the Australian Council by the Committee of Enquiry on Operatic Music Theatre in Australia*, chapter nine dealt with proposals for fostering musicals and recommended the establishment of a Musical Development Fund.

Nothing came of it and in the meantime there are whole generations of Australians who have never experienced the classics of the genre. It has been left to brave entrepreneurs such as the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust and its colleagues to mount such works as *Entwistle, Burnside and Ned Kelly*. But where is *One Chin One?* By default, it has fallen to the amateur companies to present the older works, which often suffer from the amateur approach. The recent sparkling revivals in the West End, have proved their enduring validity and appeal.

In comparison, contemporary opera has been reasonably served by the State Opera of South Australia, the Victorian State Opera and the University of NSW Opera, although no Haydn opera has been performed in Australia yet, nor any major work by Malcolm Williamson or Peggy Glanville-Hicks. The astonishing track record of the State Opera of South Australia was charted by Justin Macdonell in the last issue of *Theatre Australia*, which

brings us to Music Theatre. What a relief!

Andrew Porter reports in the *New Grove* that the generic title Music Theatre was a convenient catch-phrase of the 1960's "to designate musical works for smaller or moderate forces that make a dramatic element in their presentation, including small-scale operas" such as Alexander Goehr's *Nabokov's Fagin* as presented by the now defunct London Music Theatre Ensemble, formed within weeks of the *Perrier* Players, in the late 1960's.

For a while there was a healthy competitiveness between the two groups. Goehr directed the London Music Theatre Ensemble and Peter Maxwell Davies and Harrison Burrows were the co-Directors of the Perrier Players, which after all had as its base that great and seminal 20th century music theatre piece *Perrier Lassire* in a remarkable performance by Mary Thomas. Then Peter Maxwell Davies leapt ahead in a series of astonishing works which indeed defined the genre for the 1970's.

First there was *Eight Songs for a Mad King* with a text by Randolph Stow, and an amazing soloist with a voice range of over five octaves, Ray Hart. Here was the extended voice with a vengeance, capable of the most extraordinary expressiveness. He could sing a chord, change it from the major to the minor, and descend in ninth. Other composers quickly snatched him up — Stockhausen and Henze first of all.

Everyone said it was a freak and a once, not to be repeated. There now are some eight or nine performers of the work. When I took the great Cathy Berberian to Hart's studio in 1969, she was astonished, but even she had to flee clutching her throat.

Eight Songs for a Mad King caused a sensation and quickly performances followed in the major European festivals. The same happened with Davies' subsequent works, *Four Hours*, for solo dancer and solo cello and small group, and based on the anatomical drawings to accompany Andreas Vesalius' treatise on anatomy. Davies then refined them to the 14 Stations of the Cross, and instead of Christ resurrecting, there appeared the Antichrist cursing the audience. At the first performance Rufino Amencori, Davies' publisher at Boosey and Hawkes, fell to the ground making the

sign of the Cross. The audience was visibly shaken. It was a great night. This month a second version is having its premiere in London, with choreography by Australian Ian Speck and the role of the Christ figure taken by Mark Wrath, ex-Sydney Dance Company member. Why Wrath, when the original dancer was the world's top black dancer? Because the role calls for a dancer who can play the piano, in the case of Vesalius, a honky-tonk piano. Wrath is an accomplished keyboard player, who nearly decided to become a professional musician rather than a dancer.

Maxwell Davies' basic approach to Music Theatre is to build a piece around an individual usually in crisis, as it is the human condition which interests him. The famous *After Death* (Maggy) illustrates this (also a text by Randolph Stow) and it had a great impact when it was premiered in Adelaide for the Festival (Anthony Storr's commission).

There is no doubt in my mind, after many years producing, directing and travelling music theatre works to the provinces as well as the major festivals of Europe, that music theatre is immensely important as a medium for interesting, even exciting audiences for contemporary music. The recent evening of two performances of *Perrier Lassire* presented by the Seymour Group with male alto Murray Newham, proved a point. The first performance was a straight concert

event, and the second performance, after an interval, was staged, costumed and dramatically in. Most of the audience found them to be almost two different works, and most preferred the staged version.

This in no way is to denigrate the straight version I am disposed and determined when I go to contemporary music concerts and find myself sitting huddled with 10 others. There is nothing more chilling than the sound of 20 hands trying to create enthusiasm.

I am depressed at the "first and final performance" that so many worthy new works get. But put that same piece in a theatre set to a dance work, have the same bite, gentle and warmth applied to a real music theatre work and something else takes over. Communication. Also, a last word (like entertainment) in the arts. The contemporary composers to their detriment and chagrin that labour at their art and forget those two words are going to be unhappy and frustrated human beings and most likely much lesser artists.

With the world-wide swing back to tonality, a coming a more relaxed attitude with composers to the concept of communication. A decade ago most composers would have been aghast if they were told that they were communicating to a large audience, now it has become high praise again. The composer has found it is difficult to be loved and wanted. And somewhere that is what music theatre is about.



Peter Maxwell Davies, composer, with the original "Mad King" Ray Hart and Australian producer James Murdoch at the Prague Spring Festival.

Mostly Mozart but often others

by Fred Blanks

The year began with a bumper month for collecting Kœchel numbers.

Some people prefer collecting postage stamps. Others do it with matchbooks, cigar bands or car tickets. But for musically oriented collectors, K numbers beat them all. They retain the universally accepted system of cataloguing the music of Mozart, and though they have tended to expand, and are in certain respects misleading, nobody has managed to outdo Kœchel in supplying a framework within which Mozart's music falls neatly into place.

So who was Kœchel? Born in 1800, he was not merely a musicologist, but a botanist and naturalist. His magnum opus (in the complete works, as then known, compiled by Hasse) (who had died nine years before Kœchel was born) was published in 1862. Long before that, his work had entered into the public domain and, after his death in Vienna in 1877, A thoroughly revised edition of his Mozart catalogue was published by Alfred Einstein in 1907, and another edition with further corrections came out in 1947. But the immortality goes to Leopold Kœchel, the K. numbers are his memorial. (Oddly enough, Darmstadt Society also has K. numbers, but these stand for Rudolf Kriegstein, the American linguist/biologist born in 1910.)

Musology has proved that not all K. numbers assigned by Kœchel do in fact categorise Mozart works. K.4, for example, belongs to a *Symphony in E Major* by Karl Friedrich Abel (1725-87), and K.444 belongs to the *Mozart Symphony No. 37 in G Major*, which is actually by Michael Haydn with only its introduction by one good friend Wolfgang Amadeus. The K.150 *Wisehead* is by Bernard Flax, and K.81 refers to a D Major symphony, sometimes numbered 44 (and that well outside the accepted Mozart canon of 41 symphonies) which may be by Leopold Mozart.

But let us not wander away from the subject. Who is a 'Mozart'? That is the name and concept — borrowed from America — which dominated the first week of the Festival of Sydney. *Journal of Mostly Mozart* — as one influential commentator suggested — has been banished, and instead of T-shirts, the organisers, who were the Sydney Opera House Trust, have maintained a linkage with the



Evelyn Stockfleth, Leader of St Philip's Chamber Orchestra.



Australian Chamber Orchestra.

ABC should have sold, just for a change, just — but even if originality was not a feature of the pair of the program, there was no denying that the result was magnetic as far as attracting audience was concerned, and delightful with regard to musical results.

In 13 programs there were some 50 K numbers to be collected, and that excludes an all-day seminar headed by Christopher Nicholls and encompasses four open-air screenings.

My own share of the booty consisted of three concerts — one by the augmented Australian Chamber Orchestra conducted by John Harding (a few days later they were off to Europe to prove that Australia produces musicians as well as kangaroos), one by the Sydney Virtuosi, a small ensemble led by clarinettist Murray Khan, and one by Michael Dyson's St Phillips Chamber Orchestra, which piled in to kick up all the way to its T-Shirts for a program in which it chaperoned five soloists: Standard, not surprisingly, violin violin, and other program misfits. The concert I enjoyed most was that of the Sydney Virtuosi, the octet (including some more or less forgotten music by the London Bach Johann Christian) Haydn and Mozart, of the authenticity was not above suspicion, the musical was graceful and enjoyable even though much of it was too easy and too safe.

If you heard a phony grunting of teeth during that Mostly Mozart week, it would have come from Salieri, whom no-one had the guts to represent. But there was one offi- moush in some pre-concerts located in the northern harbour foyer of the Opera House Concert Hall, where students engaged in a kind of officially condoned and indeed managed barking, entirely grain — and though the performances were mostly inferior, the idea of entertaining the audience before the main concert in this way was commendable, and another example of the friendly atmosphere which the Opera House generates — something hard to find anywhere else in the world.

After Mostly Mozart, the Festival of Sydney moved from Bondi Beach Point to what the Lord Mayor, presumably with tongue in cheek, calls one of the finest concert halls in Australia — to wit, Sydney Town Hall. Here there was a chamber-music series in the foyer, which seats about 250, and several other concert in the Main Hall, which seats 2000. Particularly encouraging in the chamber-music series were the New England Ensemble, a trio of violinist Andrew Lonsdale, cellist James Luttrell and pianist Wendy Luttrell, they played trios by Mozart, Brahms and Shostakovich with keen balance and individual voice. Also very professional was the Sydney Piano Quartet, an amalgam of players from the Sydney String Quartet and Maragong



Murray Khan, Sydney Virtuosi Ensemble.

Piano Trio plus a double bass, they gave solo, confidential performances of Schubert's Trout and works by Beethoven and Haydn. What both these groups had to contend with was an epidemic of wrong printed program information, the standard of the Festival of Sydney in preparing programs has been atrocious. This was especially so for the Economy As Picnic which spelled the day of Wien wrongly three times in two different ways, plus making many other blunders. But the most aspect of this entertainment, which attracted a full house to the Town Hall, was that the young Music Scheme Solo Dykes, unaccompanied and unamplified, could barely be heard above the cheering and dancing, their bodies-in-the-Yankee-woods could have been bawling cawees and plucking chickens instead of string instruments.

Several other Festival of Sydney concerts which fell to my list deserve honorable mention.

At some of these, the Town Hall's fine Beethoven-style grand piano looked large. Very large, indeed, in the hands of Roger

Woodward, who played all five Beethoven concertos in two concerts, with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Myer Freiberg. The performances which I heard combined a feeling for nature with a degree of eccentricity in some details, but the overall effect was bracing. Solo pianist's chamber music and also came from Walter Gondolf, who celebrated the 50th year of playing before the public in Australia with an all-Chopin recital marked by smooth and graceful playing that tended to show concern.

A recital by the Duo Germania (Stanley Rucke, baroque violin, and Elizabeth Wright, harpsichord), a Haydn commemorative concert, several interpretations of the Flotow Ensemble which specialize in very recent music, a concert by soprano Ruth Hunter and contralto Laura Elms, and a double performance of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaris* from the Seymour Group with male alto Haydn Newthorn, all indicated that the Festival of Sydney had treated serious music with considerable respect. And, encouraging, most audiences either filled the venue or came very close to doing so.

MUSIC

-GUIDE

ACT

COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE, CANBERRA

The Canberra Festival will stage several musical events at this location 6-15 March. Enquiries: Canberra Festival (062) 49 1977

CANBERRA THEATRE

Elk of Love by Donizetti (in English) 17, 19, 20 March. Enquiries: Canberra Opera (062) 47 0249

CANBERRA SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Kontarsky Duo, 20 March. Enquiries: Musica Viva (062) 54 1097

NSW

CAPITOL THEATRE (212 3855)

Chess (Lang), March 14, 15, 16; *Peter, Paul and Mary*, March 18, 19, 20; *Joan Armatrading*, March 28, 29, 30, 31

NEWCASTLE CIVIC CENTRE

La Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare, March 6
Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 10
Enquiries: Musica Viva (042) 63 2663

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Concert Hall: La Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare, March 8
Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 11
Kontarsky Duo, March 26
Enquiries: Musica Viva (02) 29 8441

WOLLONGONG TOWN HALL

Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 10
La Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare, March 12
Enquiries: Musica Viva (042) 2 9571

SEYMOUR CENTRE

Kontarsky Duo, March 23, 24
Enquiries: Musica Viva (02) 29 8441

NEWCASTLE CITY HALL

Kontarsky Duo, March 23
Enquiries: Musica Viva (042) 63 2663

QLD

MORANGAH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 18

DYSART CIVIC CENTRE

Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 17

BLACKWATER CIVIC CENTRE

Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 18

MAYNE HALL, BRISBANE

Kontarsky Duo, March 19
Enquiries: Musica Viva (07) 378 1653

SA

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL THEATRE (51 0121)

Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Adelaide Festival of the Arts

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ronald Zollman will premiere prize-winning works in the ABC/Adelaide Festival/Polar Slyvacean Cultural Foundation Competition, March 6

On March 8 the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ronald Zollman will present excerpts from Richard Meale's new opera *Vox* together with Richard Dieulot's *Thuz Spokane Zarathustra*.

Igor Stravinsky Centenary Concert

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra will be conducted by Ronald Zollman
Enquiries: ABC (02) 300 0211

Music from America performed by the Australian Youth Orchestra. Music by Gershwin, Bernstein, Ives and Roy Harris conducted by Mark Elder
March 12

Enquiries: Adelaide Festival (08) 51 0121

Percy Grainger Centenary Concert

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra will accompany a piano-roll performance by Grainger's *Grieg's Piano Concerto*. Other Grainger works also March 18

Enquiries: ABC (02) 300 0211

Centenniation of Faust Berthold

Berthold cantata will be performed by soloists Bruce Martin, John Treloar and Sarah Walker, with a Festival choir and the Australian Youth Orchestra conducted by Mark Elder. March 29
Enquiries: Adelaide Festival (08) 51 0121

ADELAIDE TOWN HALL

The Kontarsky Duo, March 8
Enquiries: Musica Viva (08) 270 1481

ARTS COUNCIL OF SA

Touring Australian Chamber Orchestra, Grimethorpe Colliery Band and Joanne Liwo to Mt Gambier

during March

TAS

HOBART UNIVERSITY CENTRE

Kontarsky Duo, March 16

Enquiries: Musica Viva (032) 24 1602

VIC

DALLAS BROOKS HALL

Grimethorpe Colliery Band. The world's most famous brass band in its first Australian tour. March 5-9
Enquiries: Musica Viva (03) 26 5390
Kontarsky Duo, March 11
Enquiries: Musica Viva (03) 266 380

VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE

La Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare. Seven singers and instrumentalists perform popular Italian music from the 12th century to the present day. March 22-23
Enquiries: Musica Viva (03) 26 5390
Kontarsky Duo, March 29
Enquiries: Musica Viva (03) 266 390

WA

PERTH CONCERT HALL

Kontarsky Duo, March 4
Enquiries: Musica Viva (09) 366 2026

Dame Joan Sutherland Recital

The celebrated soprano Dame Joan Sutherland will be accompanied by Richard Bonynge. March 9
Enquiries: Western Australian Opera Company (09) 321 5869
Free concert conducted by Dibba Franklin, March 14
A concert performance of Charles Gounod's *Faust*. March 25-27

GERALDTON QUEENS PARK THEATRE

Family orchestral concert conducted by Measham, March 30
Schools orchestral concert conducted by Measham, March 31

WA ARTS COUNCIL

Touring Grimethorpe Colliery Brass Band to country areas. March 8-13
The assistance of the Arts Information Program of the Australia Council is acknowledged in the compilation of this Music Guide

Books

Records and collections

by John McCallum

Every year in January I get to examine about the events of the year before last, with the appearance of the *Performing Arts Year Book of Australia* (Showcase Publishers, pp 625) and every year I seem to say the same things about the book. The latest is Volume 5, for 1980, and like those before it it is an interesting record of the year's activity and a useful reference and scholarly resource; its organisation and coverage are better than last year's, and it still has a few errors and omissions. Like every other volume except the first, the front cover is dressed with a glistening modern, mildly expensive lump of architecture — an Arts Centre, patina symbol of contemporary Australian culture.

The Year Book is changed this year by the addition of a Recording section and by the reorganisation of the Theater section into companies grouped according to colour: six "Community Theatre"; "Children's Theatre"; and "Significant Amateur Theatre" (all Sydney companies — is there no significant amateur theatre anywhere else?). In general it is a detailed, comprehensively illustrated resource, and if I carp at some of the errors (readers, perhaps, are going into the details) then that is a tribute to what we come to expect from useful publications such as this.

Atmos on Missing, edited by Ben Roffe (dir., Second Black Box Press, pp 58-95), is a collection of writings on dramatic movement by actors, directors, choreas, choreographers and critics which attempts to cover aspects of the art from ancient Greece to the present. It is very patchy up to the 19th century (and the introductory notes to the extracts don't help give much historical context) but after Deburau it takes off. It is always exciting reading good detailed descriptions of great acting and the pieces-de-œuvre of Pylades, Deburau, Grimaldi and others alone make the book worth a. There are also frustratingly brief statements by 20th century greats, including D'Orazio, Barbirolli, Chaplin, Keaton, Lenny and Marconi. The book finishes with a very faint, per-share of drama by Woody Allen, called "A Little Louder Please". Highly recommended.

Theater in Education is one of the most important modern theatrical developments, and it has been almost totally neglected by establishment critics and historians. *Learning Through Theatre: Essays and casebooks on Theatre in Education*, edited by

Performing Arts Year Book of Australia 1980
vol. 5



Tony Jackson (Manchester UP), does not exactly specify that, being written largely by practitioners and other interested parties, but it is an excellent and illuminating survey of the problems and solutions various THE companies have faced. It has essays or commentaries on the features which make THE unique — features which worry many conventional theatre critics. THE stages are educational in a way which some people chalk up to theatrical experience. Most of the work is devised by the company which performs it, and is performed unscripted for more or less captive audiences. This, along with the desire for "significant" and "relevant" material, can easily make for gross self-indulgence and sloppiness. Books such as this are vital, therefore, in promoting objective discussion and pointing to standards which can be used to distinguish good THE from bad. More generally they can bring the insights and techniques of THE before a wider public. The arguments in the book, in favour of deviating from the norms and the need for continually new, constantly important standards, apply just as forcefully to adult theatre.

A less satisfactory collection of essays is contained in *The Language Of Theatre: Problems in the Translation and Transformation of Drama*, edited by Ottmar Eicher (Pragmatic Press). It is a motley group of

anecdotal and scholarly articles supposedly linked by the idea of "translating" plays from one language to another, or from one place to another or from one medium to another — a vague theme which it would take a better book than this to hold together. There are a number of speculative articles on language translation of plays (a few of which were better to quote in the foreign original or target language) and some general pieces (including one by Alex Bass and Dorothy Hewitt) on problems of shifting plays around (it's as vague as that). The book is full of insights such as "Communication becomes a problem as soon as the language of a text is no longer understood." The whole notion that directing a script on stage as a form of translation is spurious, not helped by throwing in the word "translators".

Peter N Pratt and Didi Blaauw (ed.), "A Rolling Musical based on the life of Caroline Chisholm" (Playlink Press) will be useful for schools or amateur musical societies looking for local material with just the right amount of cliché and stereotype not to stir people up too much. It is a laboursome romp through the life, trials and tribulations of the woman the author nicely calls the "lady on the Pine Bedau Nose".

SHOPFRONT



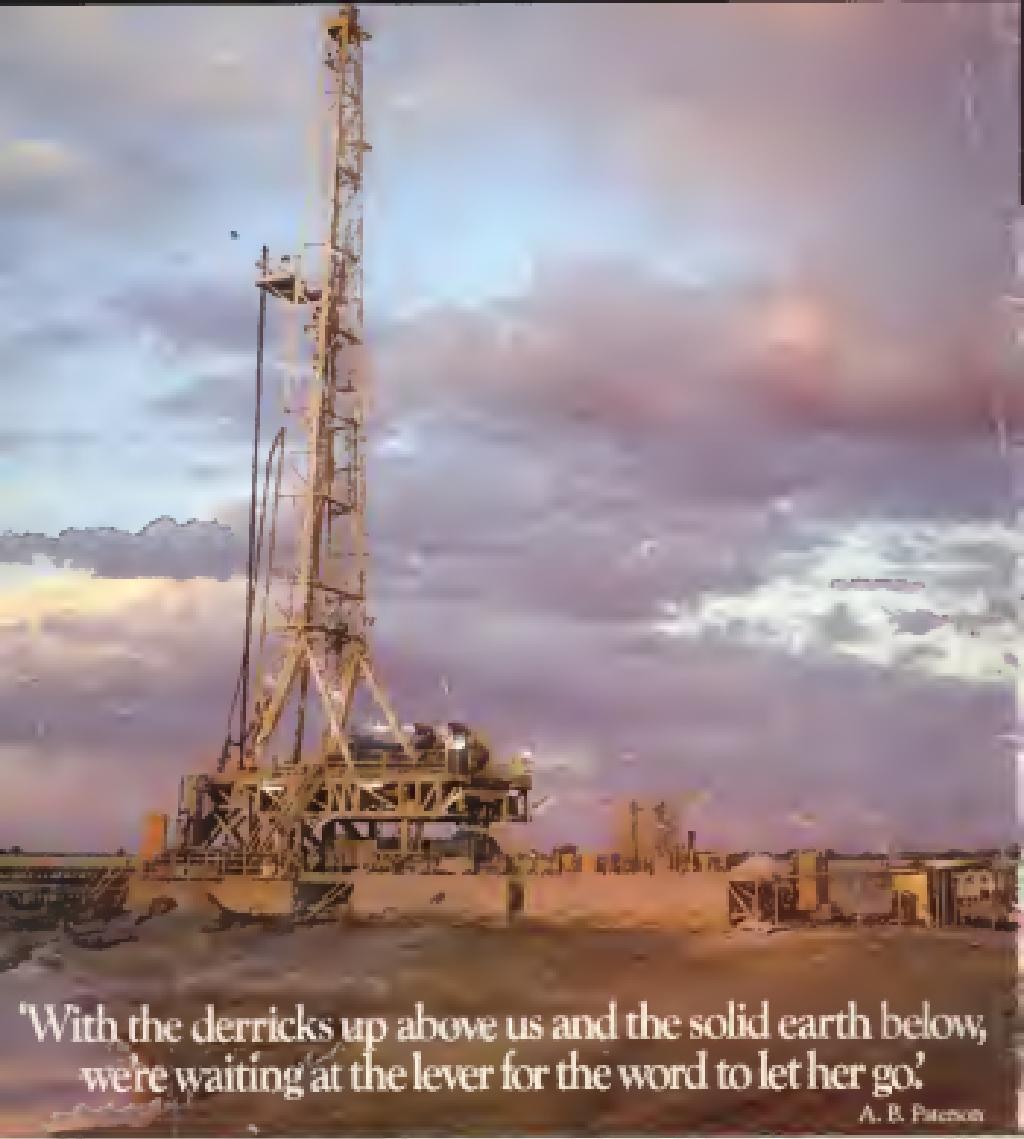
- * FREE WORKSHOPS IN THEATRE, DRAMA AND MEDIA FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
- * PRODUCTIONS OF GROUP-CREATED PLAYS/PLAYS BY YOUNG WRITERS; SCRIPTS FOR YOUNG ACTORS; PLAYS FOR SCHOOLS/COMMUNITY THEATRE PROJECTS
- * PERFORMANCES FOR AUDIENCES OF ALL AGES
- * SUBSCRIPTIONS TO OUR 1982 THEATRE SEASON, YOUTH THEATRE MAGAZINE 'ROLES' (MONTHLY) & NEWSLETTER

WRITE FOR INFORMATION

SHOPFRONT THEATRE
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
CO-OP LTD

38 CARLTON RDE.
CARLTON 2218 NSW.
(02) 588 3948
587 4071

Shopfront receives
assistance from the
Premier, Dept. of NSW
Cult. and Recreat.
Ministerial Council.



**'With the derricks up above us and the solid earth below,
we're waiting at the lever for the word to let her go.'**

A. B. Paterson

Bango Paterson penned these lines for a colourful poem over 80 years ago.

At that time, he could hardly have guessed that they would aptly describe the feelings of oilmen now working in a region often frequented by himself.

In an area 600 kilometers east of Rockhampton - known to geologists as the Galilee Basin - there's a tiny town called Bango.

The local pub is called "Clancy's Overflow". The river nearby - the

Burdekin - flows in the well-known Bango Paterson tale "A Bush Christening".

It's close to this town that has such strong associations with Bango Paterson that Bango and its co-operators are drilling the first test well in one of the largest on-shore oil exploration programs Australia has ever seen.

Together, Bango and its co-operators expect to invest more than \$40,000,000 in the Galilee Basin on seismic studies,

and a drilling programme.

As with all such exploration programs there is no guarantee of success. Oil, however, is vital to Australia's future, so the search for it - although costly - must continue.



Energy for Australia